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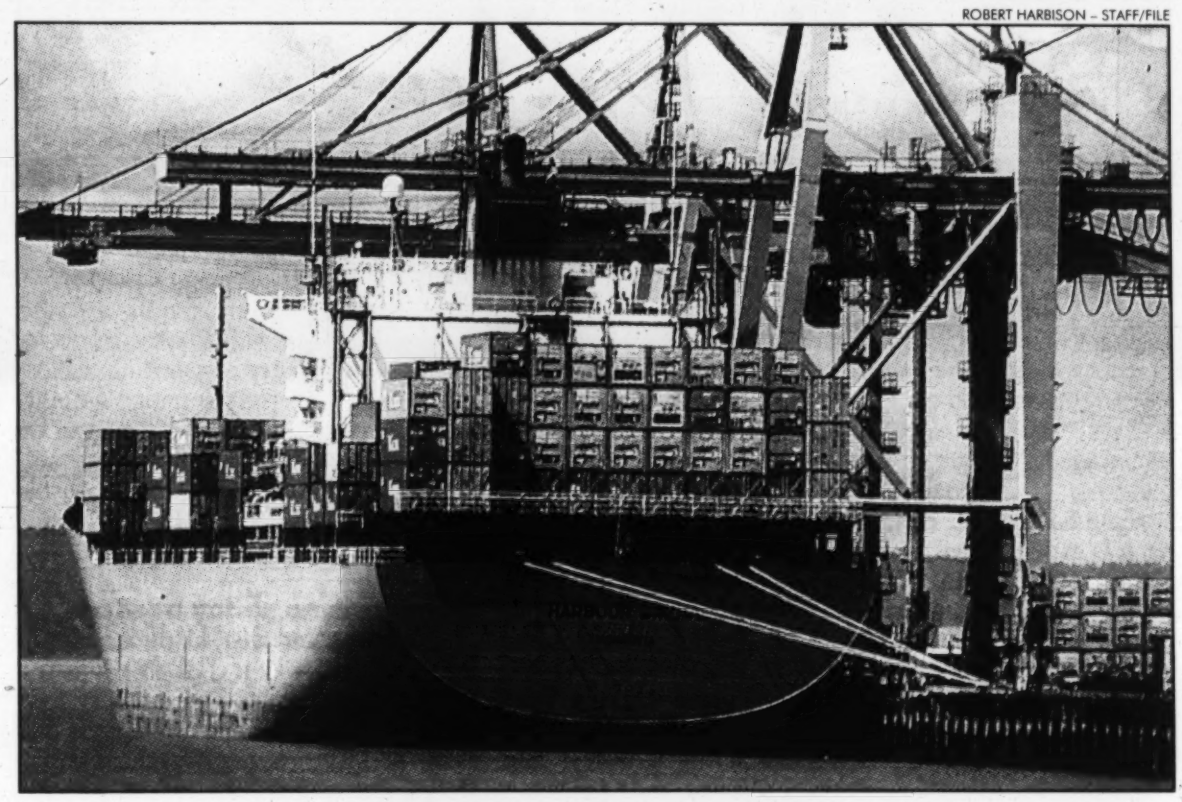

High-Tech Trade Tactics

Loading container ship in Tacoma, Wash., headed for Far Eastern ports. Several reports argue that United States trade policy is not helping high-technology companies compete against new Pacific Rim rivals. **PAGE 2.**

Public Anger Spurs Mexican Anti-Drug Efforts

Under pressure, Salinas forms elite force and hints at new laws to shore up credibility

By David Clark Scott

Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

MEXICO CITY

THE "Wanted" posters are all over Mexico. Five mugs of Mexico's most notorious drug lords are plastered to light posts, walls, and public buildings. A $5 million reward is promised for information leading to their arrest.

Never before has Mexico offered so much, so publicly.

It is a measure of the determination – some say desperation – of President Carlos Salinas de Gortari to strike a blow against narcotraffickers in the wake of the shooting of Roman Catholic Cardinal Juan Jesús Posadas Ocampo. On May 24, Cardinal Posadas and seven other Mexicans were gunned down in the parking lot of the Guadalajara airport by members of two rival drug cartels.

The public shock and outrage over Posadas's brutal death has shaken confidence in the Salinas administration and may provoke a change in Mexico's drug-fighting strategy, analysts say.

"Guadalajara makes us see with total clarity the violence that accompanies narcotrafficking. We knew it before. But now it's out in the open, and people are scared. They're clamoring for security," says Maria Celia Toro, a Colegio de México expert on the drug war.

An estimated 10,000 people converged on the Plaza de la Liberación in downtown Guadalajara last Sunday in a protest dubbed the "March of Silence." Media reports stated that apart from placards denouncing violence and the intermittent chant of "Justice, Justice, Justice," the throng walked through the streets in pro-

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LOS ANGELES ELECTION

Whites, Middle Class Help Put Republican In an Urban Hot Seat

By Daniel B. Wood

Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

LOS ANGELES

MAYOR-ELECT Richard Riordan inherits the nation's second-largest city at a time when it is rife with both crisis and opportunity.

The city has enjoyed 20 years of steady ascension to world-class metropolis under five-term Democratic Mayor Tom Bradley. But floods of immigration, a decade of federal neglect, stifling recession, and soaring crime have remade the cityscape Mr. Riordan, a Republican, will face from City Hall.

"It's a terrible time for any politician anywhere to assume such a major, visible post," says Joe Cerrell, 42-year resident and local political consultant. "Add to that making friends after one of the mudslingingest campaigns of all time, and you have a very daunting challenge."

Tuesday's election, in which Riordan won by a margin of 8 percent (54 to 46 percent) against a liberal Democrat, City Councilman Michael Woo, reflected a low voter turnout by Blacks and Hispanics, who might have helped Mr. Woo squeak to victory. It also showed the ability of Riordan to mobilize white support on the West Side and in the sprawling San Fernando Valley.

"The white middle class has felt more and more left out of the political equation in Los Angeles in recent years," notes Alan Heslop, a political demographer at Claremont McKenna College. "This shows both their concerns about getting back in the ball game, and Riordan's ability to take advantage of that."

The issues that won the election, say most pundits, were crime and the economy.

"Riordan had an easier time positioning himself as the outsider who could come in and send the right messages to criminals

See **ELECTION** *page 4*

Lawmaker says May 'sweeps' presented a 'carnival of murder and mayhem on our airwaves'

Senate Hearings Lambaste High Level of TV Violence

By John Dillin

Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

WASHINGTON

AFTER 30 years of effort, Congress may finally get some of the murder and mayhem off the television airwaves this fall.

Top entertainment officials are under mounting pressure from lawmakers and the public to rid both TV and movies of excessive violence. Alarmed by the criminally violent behavior of many young Americans, Sen. Paul Simon (D) of Illinois has led a chorus of congressmen who are demanding that Hollywood and the TV networks excise the guns and gore.

Jack Valenti, president of the Motion Picture Association of America, supports the Simon efforts to reduce violence. But he says: "Long before there was an electronic box in millions of American homes, there was violence.... I refuse to believe all the cruelties visited upon this society are caused by television."

Senator Simon counters: "I'm not suggesting television is the cause of violence in our society. But it is a cause." He says scientific research proves a direct link between criminal behavior and screen violence. "We know that to be a fact," he says.

The statistics of TV violence are familiar to most Americans. If a child watches two-to-four hours of commercial TV a day, the child would see 8,000 TV murders and 100,000 other violent acts by the age of 12.

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Controversy at Rights Conference

Several nations will challenge the universality of human rights at a landmark UN meeting next week.

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Lyon's Top Eateries Battle Recession

French chef-owners strive to keep high standards while offering incentives.

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WIN McNAMEE/REUTERS

COMPROMISE: *President Clinton discusses proposals for his economic package with Senate leaders this week.*

Senate Readies New Fiscal Plan For Its Debate

SENATE Democrats, given a White House blessing to write their own deficit-reduction plan, are trying to shrink President Clinton's proposed energy tax and make it less worrisome to United States exporters.

The tax still would be paid by consumers. Instead of raising the price of gasoline by 8 cents a gallon, the increase might be only 6 cents; the increase in the typical home electric bill might be $1.75 or so a month, rather than $2.25.

WASHINGTON WATCH

"We are talking and we are confident we'll get an agreement" that will pass the Senate Finance Committee and the Senate, majority leader George Mitchell (D) of Maine said Tuesday.

A day earlier, Mr. Clinton acknowledged he could not win his plan and gave the Finance Committee the green light to make changes – within reason. He said any bill must cut the deficit by at least $500 billion over five years, most of the tax must be paid by upper-income people and the plan must include a broad energy tax.

Despite the concession, budget director Leon Panetta said yesterday on Fox TV, "overall, 90 percent of the president's plan is going to be what the Senate is going to have to act on," just as about 90 percent of the original bill was accepted by the House.

New Appointments

Former Vice President Walter Mondale has accepted Clinton's offer to become ambassador to Japan, an administration official said yesterday. The administration is eager to install a new ambassador before the July economic summit in Tokyo.

Meanwhile, the White House announced that New Hampshire political consultant J. Joseph Grandmaison will be nominated to be director of the Trade and Development Agency. Mr. Grandmaison, a former chairman of the state Democratic Party, endorsed Clinton when his campaign was faltering shortly before the New Hampshire primary.

– Compiled by Terri Theiss

NATIONAL

Trade Policy Does Not Compute

Reports argue that US high-tech companies do not receive appropriate support

By Laurent Belsie
Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

PITTSBURGH

DO America's trade laws work? Not very well, when it comes to high technology.

That is the conclusion of a new report released yesterday by the Council on Competitiveness. "Overall, US public policy has not been structured effectively to meet competitiveness challenges," says the council, a nonprofit group of chief executives in business, labor, and academia.

Although such coordination would have helped previous administrations, it is especially important for President Clinton.

"I think [former Presidents] Bush and Reagan needed it," says Eric Garfinkel, chairman of the council project's advisory committee. Today "the need is greater because we have a more activist president."

The new report echoes similar conclusions from other groups and individuals. In April, the Carnegie Commission on Science, Technology, and Government released a report that found in the White House "a crazy-quilt of poorly defined responsibilities for science and technology in international affairs," as Rodney Nichols, chief executive officer of the New York Academy of Sciences, put it.

Laura D'Andrea Tyson, now White House chief economist, has made the same point repeatedly. "The traditional approaches to trade and domestic policy that served the nation so well when American companies had an unrivaled technological lead are no longer adequate," she wrote in her 1992 book "Who's Bashing Whom: Trade Conflict in High-Technology Industries."

Perhaps the clearest example of trade-policy inadequacy is the case of liquid crystal displays or LCDs – the screens used on laptop computers.

Policies can cost jobs

In 1990, US LCD producers filed an anti-dumping petition against the Japanese. Nearly a year later, the Commerce Department imposed 63 percent duties on active-matrix LCDs, used in high-end color laptops. That helped the US LCD industry but forced US computermakers Apple and Compaq to move part of their production abroad. That way they could import assembled computers, rather than just the displays, and avoid the duty.

In February, the International Trade Commission suspended the duties, pending a final decision from Commerce.

"Although the US government has described flat-panel displays as a critical technology, little has been done to improve the competitiveness of the industry," the council's report concluded. If LCDs are a critical technology, then policymakers "must create an integrated, systematic approach to the industry, which includes capital market reform, the establishment of consortia, and support for the underlying technology infrastructure." The Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA) in January budgeted $12 million for a new United States Display Consortium after 12 US companies formally requested it.

The need to coordinate technology and trade policy seems to transcend party lines. Ms. Tyson describes herself as a "cautious activist."

Mr. Garfinkel was in the Commerce Department during the Bush administration.

In semiconductors, US policy was more successful. After three anti-dumping cases against Japanese chipmakers in 1985, the US and Japan signed an agreement calling for foreign chip companies to get a set share of the Japanese market.

It took six years, sanctions, and another agreement to reach that mark, but in 1992, the US and its counterparts finally captured 20 percent of Japan's market.

More important, the report says, the US followed up with an innovative domestic policy – an industry consortium, called Sematech, to improve the nation's ability to make the machinery that fabricates semiconductors. "Trade policy mechanisms should ... be complemented by a broader, competitiveness-based set of domestic policies," the council concluded.

Sometimes no policy needed

But not too activist, as the case of high-definition television (HDTV) illustrates.

In 1989, activists and industry leaders were warning about the dire effects of Japanese and European government efforts in HDTV. Fortunately, the report concludes, government did nothing. A mid-sized US company called General Instrument created a digital HDTV and, suddenly, the US leapfrogged into the lead again.

Critics suggest that HDTV proves that government should take a hands-off approach. That's probably too simplistic. Government did play a role. The FCC made several key decisions that encouraged the industry to investigate HDTV. ARPA provided funding for several technologies that helped make the digital HDTV possible.

But "policymakers must take special care to ensure that their decisions do not deter the emergence of new, advanced technologies," the council report concludes.

Kantor Says NAFTA Will Bring More US Jobs

WASHINGTON

MICKEY KANTOR, the United States trade representative, says the controversial free-trade agreement with Mexico and Canada should add 200,000 jobs to the American economy within the next two years.

Ambassador Kantor, who spoke with reporters yesterday at a Monitor breakfast, says the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) should be ready for Congress in September.

Despite widespread opposition to NAFTA from major labor unions and some environmental groups, Mr. Kantor predicts the agreement will win approval in the House and Senate, though the House could be difficult.

Right now, about one-third of the House is pro-NAFTA, one-third is anti-NAFTA, and everyone else is right in the middle, Kantor says. To win broader support, Kantor is negotiating side agreements with Mexico and Canada to ease US concerns about labor standards and environmental regulations, and to control unexpected surges of imports.

NAFTA would drop trade restrictions between the three major nations of North America over the next decade, with some barriers falling almost immediately. Ross Perot, a major opponent, warns that NAFTA will lead to a "great sucking sound" as US jobs are pulled out of the country to low-wage Mexico.

Kantor disputes that and chides Mr. Perot for having "no confidence" in American workers' ability to compete in a free market environment.

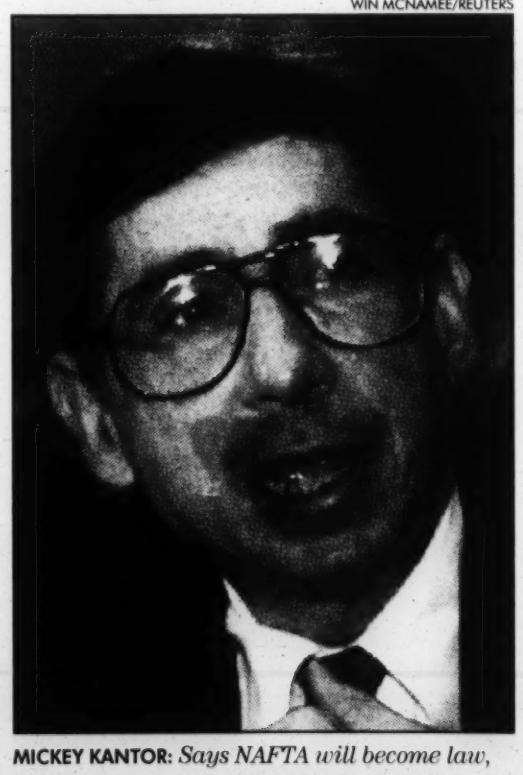
Meanwhile, Kantor reenforced the get-tough approach that the Clinton White House will apparently take toward both Japan and China on trade issues.

Kantor noted that China is closed to 220 to 230 items produced in the US, even though China runs an $18.3 billion trade surplus with the US.

On Japan, Kantor declared: "We must get that trade deficit down." Japan's $53.2 billion trade surplus with the US is costing American jobs and is no longer sustainable politically, Kantor says.

– John Dillin

WIN MCNAMEE/REUTERS



MICKEY KANTOR: *Says NAFTA will become law, but it may be a tough fight in the House of Representatives to win approval.*

R. NORMAN MATHENY – STAFF

YOUTHS IN NEWARK, N.J.: *Members of both the public and private sectors argue that real improvement in job creation for young people requires a complete overhaul, rather than simple adjustment, of federal programs designed to provide skill training.*

Youth Jobs Policy Caught in Budget Battles

By Amy Kaslow
Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

WASHINGTON

UNITED States Rep. Maxine Waters is fighting hard to draw national attention to her most pressing concern: America's unemployed youths.

Ms. Waters, a California Democrat and Los Angeles's leading black politician, has proposed the $80 million Youth Fair Chance program which provides needy 17-to-30-year-olds with a modest stipend to stay enrolled in vocational education, degree equivalency, and apprenticeship programs. Waters has won both White House and substantial congressional approval, but this week she encountered strong opposition in the Senate.

In the constant budget battles among national policymakers, measures to integrate the growing number of young and out-of-work Americans into the mainstream economy move slowly.

While the federal government has been financing vocational training for a hundred years, advocates say Washington still has no strategy to stem increases in the high-school dropout rate and bridge gaps in education and job skills.

"When we look at programs [such as Ms. Waters's] only after a riot, what are we saying? We're dealing with the symptom, not the cause," says Alan Zuckerman, executive director of the advocacy group National Youth Employment Coalition.

While President Clinton has included some changes in funding for job training and employment opportunities in his ever-evolving economic package, politicians, advocates, and professionals in the field say the problems will continue to compound until there is a major overhaul, not simple refinements, in programs.

The biggest target should be the huge federally funded Jobs Training Partnership Act (JTPA), which spends $15 million a year in New York City alone, says Peter Kleinbard, director of Manhattan's Young Adult Learning Academy, a remedial education and job-placement center.

"JTPA has been a real bomb," he says. "There's no vision or strong management from the federal government, and the bureaucracies are corrosive." Local JTPA contractors looking for an early return on their investment help the jobless who are easiest to place, at the expense of more troubled youth, Mr. Kleinbard says.

"These people don't show up on anybody's statistics – they're out on the streets in New York, in Detroit, in St. Louis, in Philadelphia – and America just walks around them," according to Waters, who says her legislation is one chip at the block of federal mismanagement.

It is imperative to give both the jobless and those asked to support their integration into the economy a common cause, says Howard Cullum, Virginia's secretary of health and human resources. His state is making strides that should be taken on a national level, he says. "Virginia taxpayers will fund job training if they can see completed projects, such as a walkway, a zoo cage, a church repaired, a road constructed."

YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

"Nationally, we need to rethink what is the 'second-chance system,' " says Mr. Cullum. "Our objective – whether it's through community-based service or through work study programs – is to move youth out of subsidized jobs and push them into the private sector."

Kleinbard says the employment prospects are poor.

"The economy isn't prepared to absorb BAs from college, much less our graduates," he says. Few of Kleinbard's students and others who are participating in such "second chance" programs are picked up for full-time employment in the private sector. Most, if they do find work, take government-sponsored jobs. The more coveted private-sector employers generally stay away from at-risk youth, Kleinbard says.

Waters laments that "there are many small and medium businesses that look for experienced people because they cannot afford to train [these youths]."

While the Clinton administration has put great stock in private-sector job generation, current and future economic conditions look dim. "Employment gains are likely to remain anemic because businesses do not think the recovery will accelerate and the costs of hiring and firing are much greater than they used to be," says Michael Evans of Evans Economics Inc.

And businesses face increasing obstacles to increasing their employment rolls. Small and mid-sized firms, generators of most of the nation's job growth, must devote capital to a host of federally imposed mandates, from family-leave policies to likely costly health-care provisions.

If government were to help business in meeting those costs, the payoff would be high, Cullum says. "A $3,000 health-care bill is much cheaper than a $7,500 welfare check," he says. He adds that giving business the investment incentives necessary to hire and train American youth "will show that government assistance is a true bridge rather than a permanent receptacle for the less fortunate."

Meanwhile, the political battle continues in Washington. Sen. William Roth (R) of Delaware harshly criticizes Clinton's tax proposals, which he says have caused business confidence to plunge and threaten to result in 400,000 to 1.2 million job losses. "Those are not all youth, of course," he concedes, but young, inexperienced, and untrained workers are less employable than adults, he says.

Mr. Roth's own jobs bill – which calls for business tax credits for new employees, small business expensing deduction increases and other incentives – is sponsored by Senate minority leader Robert Dole (R) of Kansas. "There's really only one way to go and that's to re-create what happened in the [relatively laissez-faire environment of the] 1980s – that's the one time when there was a dip in the unemployment rate of the young," he says.

■ *Part 3 of 3. Other articles ran May 26 and June 4.*

Boston Mayor Set to Take Vatican Post

ENDING days of speculation, Boston Mayor Raymond Flynn said Tuesday he will go forward with plans to take up his post as US ambassador to the Vatican. His decision clears the way for the many candidates eager to be his successor.

Over the weekend, Mr. Flynn indicated that he was not interested in the position if he could not travel to troubled areas such as Bosnia and Haiti.

But Tuesday at a Washington press conference in front of the White House, the mayor said President Clinton and Secretary of State Warren Christopher assured him he could assume an expanded role as ambassador.

"The money issue itself was not the issue," said Flynn. "I just wanted to make sure that I had responsibility and I had a broad role."

Mr. Clinton appointed Flynn to the post in March. A pro-choice, conservative Democrat, the Boston mayor campaigned around the country for Clinton during the presidential race to help build support from the so-called Reagan Democrats.

But over the weekend, Flynn expressed doubts about his new role. One reason is because the State Department refused to allow him to hold a fund-raiser intended to raise money for entertainment and travel expenses for the ambassadorship.

FROM THE STATES

Flynn said the State Department did not understand the original plan he worked out in March with Clinton on his enlarged role. The mayor envisions a position allowing him to deal with economic and social justice issues, hunger, and homelessness in trouble spots around the world. He said he wanted to take a position that was more than simply ceremonial.

The Boston mayor surprised some because he made his dissatisfaction with the Clinton administration public. At a special meeting Sunday, Flynn told mayoral candidates of his reservations about his new post.

"I think he's been very, very clever. He's taken full advantage of the president's weakness," says Joseph Slavet, senior fellow at the University of Massachusetts' McCormack Institute in Boston. "The president is under fire from every which place ... and so [Clinton] didn't need another diversion. He didn't need another screaming body complaining about his appointment."

While the Senate must still confirm his nomination as ambassador, Flynn hopes details will be wrapped up by June 19 when Clinton arrives in Boston to speak at Northeastern University's graduation.

Flynn is serving the second half of his third four-year term as mayor.

– Elizabeth Ross

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and to business," says Susan Estrich, a political scientist at the University of Southern California.

Others say the Riordan win showed an inability by Woo to adequately address issues of poverty, racism, and business accountability to the community in the wake of the 1992 riots.

"Woo spent his campaigning harping about Riordan's millions and drinking problem but didn't face the central problems facing this city," says Erik Mann, director of the Labor/Community Strategy Center, a nonprofit, grass-roots think tank.

In choosing Riordan, Los Angeles voters went for a 63-year-old lawyer/businessman with a $100 million fortune. A land developer and investment banker, Riordan is one of the largest political contributors in California. He has made more than $2 million in gifts and loans to initiative campaigns and candidates of both parties since 1980.

"This signals the end of the Bradley-era Jewish/Black coalition and a neo-regurgitation of the white, Valley, and business coalition that ruled before Bradley," says H. Erik Schockman, director of the Center for Multi-Ethnic and Trans-National Studies.

Riordan sold himself as an outsider "tough enough to turn L.A. around." His two most vocal campaign pledges were regulatory reform that will make the city more business friendly, and adding 3,000 more police on the streets in his first four years. He has advocated privatizing several city operations to raise the needed revenue, such as a 30-year management lease of L.A. International Airport.

Political observers here say Riordan will face a row of hurdles both long and high.

In descending importance, those hurdles are: (1) attracting jobs and new businesses; (2) fighting crime with dwindling city revenue amid the area's growing ethnic diversity; (3) building a governing coalition inclusive of constituencies alienated in the divisive election; and (4) building trust.

Press, public, and pundits are divided on how – and if – Riordan can clear those hurdles.

"Riordan is starting at Square 1 in figuring out the answers to all these," says Sherry Jeffe, a political scientist at the Claremont Graduate School. Against him are a powerful, 15-member City Council under a city charter with weak mayoral powers and the specter of a $300-million deficit in the current city budget, she says. Though Riordan was commissioner of Parks and Recreation and the city coliseum under Bradley, "being mayor is unlike anything he has ever done," she says.

'In trying to tag each other with names, the issues got lost. Whenever the issues get lost, we lose.'

– State Sen. Diane Watson, a Woo supporter

Heslop counters: "This is a man who will surprise people in his ability to reach out across ethnic and class lines. He will bring a businessman's instinct for making things run better and giving greater efficiency to government."

L.A.'s sprawling collective of cultures – as diverse as Hollywood, Beverly Hills, Venice Beach, and Watts – now wobbles at a crossroads, these same observers say. They wonder if Los Angeles will become an increasingly vibrant industrial capital of the Pacific Rim, a smog-choked, divisive metropolis – or something in between?

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Movies are even bloodier. "Die Hard 2" depicted 264 violent deaths, according to figures supplied by Leonard Eron, a research psychologist at the University of Michigan. "Robocop" had 81. "Total Recall" had 74.

Dr. Eron, who testified this week before the Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on the Constitution, chaired by Simon, said widespread violence in television and movies is a "public health problem" and an "epidemic."

Congress looks to Hollywood

Congress wants Hollywood to change its act. To facilitate industry efforts to reduce violence, Congress passed the "Television Improvement Act of 1990." The act sets aside portions of the antitrust laws for three years to permit the establishment of industrywide standards to reduce violence in entertainment. With the law's December 1993 deadline fast approaching, entertainment officials will gather Aug. 2 in Los Angeles to look for answers. Mr. Valenti, Hollywood's top lobbyist in Washington, promises that his colleagues will "rise to the challenge."

Some members of Congress are running out of patience, however. Rep. Charles Schumer (D) of New York, a member of the House Judicary Committee, says that the just-completed May "sweeps" month, when networks and local stations compete for high ratings, was a "carnival of murder and mayhem on our airwaves."

Cable is even worse, Representative Schumer says. He charges that the "proliferation of gore and sleaze" shown on cable are driving networks to more violent programs of their own.

Schumer urges three quick steps:

■ He calls for a separate ratings system to reveal the violence content of both films and television shows. The ratings would help parents monitor what their children watch.

■ He wants the Advertising Council to fashion an antiviolence campaign, much like the anti-smoking campaign, to raise public awareness about what he calls a "crisis."

■ He has crafted legislation to create a presidential commission to study the problem and present solutions.

Sen. Carl Levin (D) of Michigan, who characterizes the recent May rating period as "murder month," sees another problem troubling many parents – promotional ads for violent programs.

Even on family-oriented broadcasts, such as sports and comedy, networks often telecast promotions that depict the worst kinds of violence, including murder and terrorism.

Senator Levin says: "A parent can prevent a child from watching a TV show which is known to be violent. However, when a violent or offensive commercial is tucked into an otherwise ... family-oriented show, there is no prior warning...."

Tough task for rulemakers

Yet curbing violence can be controversial. For example, the National Coalition on Television Violence (NCTV) reports that violence has increased sharply since 1980, when the most action-packed show ("Enos") averaged 22 incidents per hour. By 1992, NCTV reports nine shows had 24 or more violent incidents per hour. The worst show had 60.

And what was the worst show? "The Young Indiana Jones Chronicles," a program that won critical raves from educators and reviewers for depicting historic events and major figures, such as Theodore Roosevelt and Sigmund Freud.

Kerry McCluggage, chairman of Paramount Television Group, which jointly produces the show with George Lucas, said he was "stunned" by the rating. One person's "violence," it seems, is another person's "educational television." Which indicates why would-be rule-makers still have a tough job ahead.

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found silence.

President Salinas is responding to the public's outrage by calling for a "grand national crusade" against the drug traffickers who "corrupt and rot everything they touch." Salinas announced on June 2 that a new elite antinarcotics law enforcement unit would be formed. He also called upon justice officials to develop constitutional and legal reforms by the end of the month to give authorities "better legal instruments" in their fight.

Mexico is what the latest United States State Department Narcotics Report calls "a major source country" for heroin and marijuana. And, an estimated 50-70 percent of the South American cocaine sold in the US is shipped through Mexico.

While the State Department report praises Mexico's "vigorous" and "comprehensive" antidrug campaign, it notes that "corruption remains deep-rooted," and Mexico's money-laundering laws are weak. Controls on chemicals used in the manufacture of illicit drugs are also said to be lax.

Salinas has given no details about what reforms are likely, but analysts expect the government to move quickly to close legal loopholes that facilitate money laundering here. There are rumors that Salinas is also considering instituting the death penalty for convicted drug traffickers.

"Traitors" within the Mexican police are a major problem, Mexico's Attorney General Jorge Carpizo admits. In the Guadalajara slaying, 13 people have been arrested to date, including six Mexican police officers.

But even with an elite force, Mexico will not stop the violence or the cocaine from passing through Mexico to the US, says Ms. Toro. She argues that the surge in drug-related violence (at least three major gun battles have occurred in recent months) is due to the successes of Salinas policy.

Since Salinas took office, several key narcotics kingpins have been jailed. "The violence is a function of the success. When you knock off the top drug lords, there are power vacuums. The process of filling them is violent, as gangs square off against one another," Toro says.

INDEED, Toro believes that if the Mexican government decides to mount a "frontal assault" on drug traffickers, more violence will ensue. She doubts Salinas will adopt that course of action. "Given the choice between more violence and more cocaine, the voting public would prefer more cocaine quietly passing through Mexico," she says.

The shooting of Posadas has not only raised fears about public safety, but it has damaged the Mexican government's credibility. The government issued conflicting explanations about what happened, and federal and local police have been accused of protecting the drug-cartel members.

"Salinas presented an image of a powerful president in charge of everything. Nothing escaped his eye or his will," says Lorenzo Meyer, a historian. "But Guadalajara shows that this 'all-powerful president' with an all-powerful state cannot do what is the basic duty of a liberal state: Provide security. Control the police."

Salinas is walking "a very delicate line" in trying to regain the upper hand, agrees Denise Dresser, a political scientist at the Mexican Autonomous Technical Institute.

Professor Dresser believes Salinas will either take a harder line in the drug fight or simply back away from the problem. She notes the Mexican presidential elections will be held in mid-1994. "He may figure, as a lame duck, it's best to toss this one into the lap of his successor."

Either way, Guadalajara could influence the presidential succession, Dresser says. It may open the way for more conservative hard-liners in the next Cabinet. "Salinas will want someone who can deal with this problem, someone with connections to the old guard, to the security forces."

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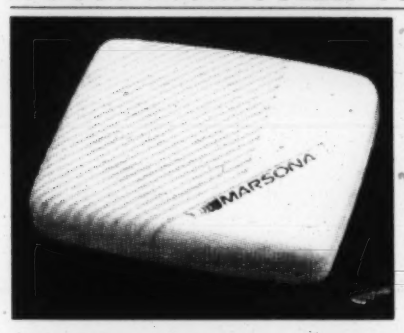

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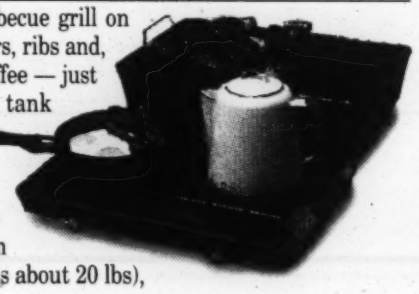

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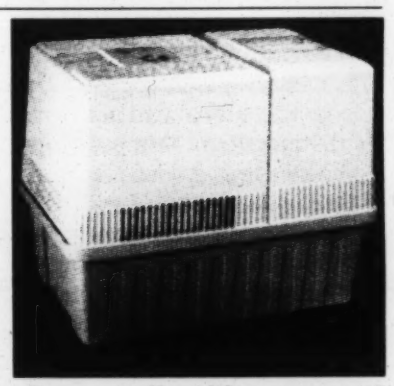

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Leadership Contest In Canada Heats Up Before Convention

By Mark Clayton
Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

BOSTON

THE race to succeed Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney in the Progressive Conservative Party, all but locked up a month ago, has become a sprint to the finish.

Defense Minister Kim Campbell took an early lead after Mr. Mulroney, dogged by low approval ratings, announced his resignation Feb. 24. She appeared the Conservative's best hope for putting on a fresh face and extending their nine-year hold on power when Canadians vote in fall elections. She gained support rapidly, and more experienced hands moved aside.

But her momentum has stalled. Polls of 3,850 delegates to Sunday's leadership convention in Ottawa show Ms. Campbell's rival, 34-year-old Environment Minister Jean Charest of Quebec, quickly closing the gap. Underscoring that trend, well-respected former Prime Minister Joe Clark on Monday endorsed Mr. Charest.

Charest is now gaining, party insiders say, but Campbell is still significantly ahead in the number of committed delegates with little time to go. "Many delegates were chosen early," and some may be swaying, says a party official. "I don't think the slippage is going to be enough for Charest to catch her."

A lawyer from Vancouver, British Columbia, who has held senior government postings, Campbell has the right credentials. She can attract needed support for her party from the west. She is also the "right" gender, boasts insider support (some say Mulroney hand-picked her), and has money. Many pundits favor her to win.

Part of Charest's surge in the polls can be attributed to a series of stumbles by Campbell, including one interview in which she alienated Roman Catholics by referring to the "evils of the papacy." She also angered many voters by sounding a lot like Mulroney when she called those who opposed plans to reduce the nation's debt "enemies of Canada."

A poll published June 7 by the Globe and Mail newspaper in Toronto showed 43 percent of about 4,000 convention delegates favor Campbell, while 31 percent support Charest.

The rest are undecided or aligned with one of three other candidates. A poll published last week in the Financial Post showed an even narrower Campbell lead, with 46 percent saying they would vote for her on a first ballot, and 41 percent favoring Charest.

While Campbell's problems have been heavily influenced by the high expectations set early on for her, Charest began with two strikes against him – his youth and his Quebec home. Because a long line of prime ministers have come from the French-speaking province, pundits and pollsters say the public wants a prime minister from a different province for a change.

CHAREST, however, appears to have blunted the complaint about his age by outperforming Campbell in a series of debates across Canada. His fluent English may also have reduced concerns that his Quebec heritage is a political liability.

"I was leaning toward Campbell at the start, but I'm now neutral," says Charles Murray, a delegate from Long Reach, New Brunswick. "Based on talking to some others, I'd say there may be some Campbell delegates who regret their decision."

Campbell's delegate support is said to be "soft" and Charest's much more solid. But either candidate, observers warn, could fall victim to the "Flora MacDonald syndrome." Ms. MacDonald was leading contender for the party leadership in 1976 and had amassed strong support among delegates. But the number of delegates entered polling booths wearing her pin far outnumbered votes she received, and her opponent won.

Another wild card is the block of about 800 to 1,000 party faithful. These include members of Parliament, senators, executive office holders, all of whom are unlikely to show their true colors because they have to work with whomever wins.

"My guess is that group is fairly solidly for Campbell, and that will push her over top," Mr. Murray says.

INTERNATIONAL

Ethiopia's Regime Stymies Opposition, Critics Assert

Rebels who ousted a police state are now being accused of intolerance

By Robert M. Press
Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

NAIROBI, KENYA

THE government that ousted one of Africa's most brutal dictatorships from Ethiopia and promised democratic reforms two years ago is showing less and less tolerance for dissenters.

The regime of Meles Zenawi has stymied opposition parties, dismissed outspoken professors, and has moved to gain control over key non-government organizations that could provide independent criticism of the government, say Ethiopian critics, Western diplomats, and human rights organizations.

Mr. Meles has "brought peace and eliminated the police state," a Western diplomat in Addis Ababa says. But "outside of Addis, [opposition] political party offices seem to be all closed down. The government does not want any independent, non-political associations."

In the wake of some journalists being questioned by police, "self-censorship has become the rule," says an independent Ethiopian journalist. "I wish they [the government] were a little more thick-skinned."

Chaired by Meles, the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) led the final advance on Addis Ababa that overthrew the 17-year dictatorship of Mengistu Haile-Mariam in May 1991 and brought a 30-year civil war to an end. Meles became interim president, called for a national conference, and invited ethnic groups to form political parties. Most have.

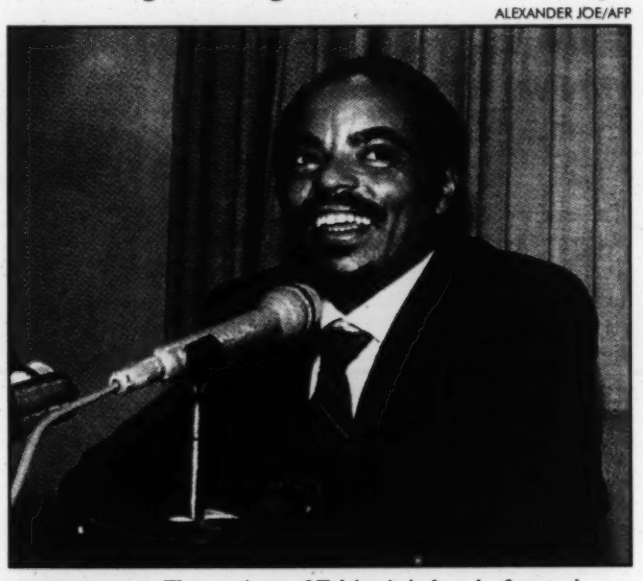
In recent months, however, many opposition parties have been running into administrative roadblocks, allegedly set up by the government, such as denial of access to office space, say diplomats in Addis Ababa. Ethiopian human rights advocate Mesfin Wolde Mariam claims bank accounts of some opposition parties have been frozen.

Meaza Birru, spokeswoman for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, denies both allegations.

But there are other indications of political tightening. Several southern parties were dismissed from the transitional government, which is dominated by the northern Tigre ethnic group, for disagreeing with state policies. The nation-wide Ethiopian Teachers Association (ETA), another source of political dissent, has been effectively neutralized in recent months with the closing of most of its offices.

Ms. Meaza says the ETA, which includes secondary school teachers, has two sets of leaders claiming to be legitimate. Mr. Mesfin counters that one, "a very, very small group," was organized by the government and has no legitimacy. The legitimate group was headed by Professor Taye Woldesmiate, Mesfin says.

ALEXANDER JOE/AFP



MELES ZENAWI: *The regime of Ethiopia's head of state is coming under fire for stifling opposition. Critics say dissenters have been arrested and kept from organizing.*

Forty faculty members of the University of Addis Ababa, many of them well-known for criticizing the Meles regime, were fired in April. Leah Leatherbee, director of the Horn of Africa Program of the Fund for Peace in New York, says, "They were fired for political reasons."

Meaza, the government spokeswoman, asserts that some of the professors were dismissed because of age.

Government intolerence has apparently affected Tigreans – members of the country's dominant ethnic group – within the Meles regime. Dissident Ethiopians living in Washington claim the government has arrested about 50 Tigreans serving in government posts, possibly torturing some of them, for not supporting the party on government policies.

"The [EPRDF] has denied freedom of speech, freedom of opposition, freedom of ideas, within the party," a Tigrean living in Washington told the Monitor. A Western diplomat says the government is conducting an internal review of its officials, and that this might be what prompted such an allegation. Officials at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Defense, contacted by the Monitor, said they were unaware of any such arrests.

But Ms. Leatherbee of the Fund for Peace says political detention is a reality in Ethiopia. "Things are definitely closing up a bit," she says, asserting that 700 to 1,000 senior Ethiopian officials from the previous regime have been imprisoned. A Western diplomat confirms they are still detained.

Most Ethiopian dissidents today are urban elites, especially in Addis Ababa, says Abdul Mohammed, director of Inter-Africa Group, a research organization in the capital.

Unlike most African governments today, the Meles administration "is basically a regime that upholds the interest of peasants," he says. The challenge of the government now is to come up with a formula that satisfies both urban and rural citizens, he says.

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MM38011

Rights Controversy Clouds UN Conference

As some governments try to bolster UN rights system, others demand culture accommodation

By Mark Clayton
Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor
BOSTON

APATHY among Western nations and a bid by Asian and other governments to challenge the fundamental doctrine that human rights are universal and individual are clouding the opening of a landmark international human rights conference in Vienna next week.

The purpose of the conference – the first such global meeting since 1968 – is to allow the United Nation's 183 member nations to evaluate UN rights monitoring and enforcement and find ways to bolster the system.

But many activists say the Vienna meeting may instead provide an opportunity for governments to diffuse pressure to enlarge the UN rights umbrella.

"I know several [human] rights groups whose leaders regard this conference more as an exercise in damage control than a glorious extension of human rights," says Laurie Wiseberg, the executive director of Human Rights Internet, a Canadian organization that tracks 5,000 rights groups around the world.

"A large group of Asian countries didn't want this conference to take place," Ms. Wiseberg says. "A number of them will now use this opportunity to try to weaken the [UN] system."

Governments from Asia and the Middle East, Wiseberg and other activists say, are pushing for a shift in UN rights enforcement that redefines human rights on a region-by-region basis, taking into account cultural particularities and national sovereignty concerns. China and Iran, they say, are leading the charge for such an approach, supported by Malaysia, Indonesia, Pakistan, Singapore, and others.

"The decision to hold the conference came in a moment of optimism, when the cold war was ending," says Ian Martin, a former secretary-general of Amnesty International who now heads a UN human rights monitoring team in Haiti. "But if we're not careful, this conference could become a victim of growing tensions between North and South rather than East and West."

At the final preparatory meeting for the Vienna conference held in April in Geneva, Syria and Yemen spent days trying to block a UN position paper that included the West's basic position that human rights are universal. The paper was finally included in a draft of the final world conference declaration, but the lost time meant diplomats were unable to finalize the declaration. It goes to Vienna full of disputed passages.

"Who knows what's going to happen" in Vienna, says Reed Brody, executive director of the Washington-based International Human Rights Law Group. "It's really quite dicey. We're fighting just to reaffirm basic principles."

New official proposed

The hottest exchanges are expected over proposals to:

- Create a UN high commissioner for human rights empowered to travel the globe to ensure a swifter, coordinated UN response to rights violations, and to give rights more visibility.
- Create an international tribunal, or court, to put violators of human rights on trial.
- Establish a special UN rapporteur on women to focus on violence against women and other restrictions of their rights.
- Boost substantially the funding for the UN rights program.

Hope abounds for these and other reforms. But some activists fear some nations may demand cuts to existing UN rights monitoring in exchange for a new commissioner on human rights.

Adding to the uncertainty over the conference outcome is a perception among rights activists of apathy on the part of Western Europe and the US.

Philip Alston, who chairs the UN Committee on Economic and Social Rights, agrees that several Asian governments will probably try to retrench on rights monitoring. If they succeed, he says, it will only be because developed countries did not approach the conference with unity and zeal.

"It's a question of energy," Mr. Alston says. "The other regions are not particularly energized for, or against, improved arrangements for human rights. The Asians are very energized and anxious to put a lid on a lot of the proposals being put forward. So they can have a disproportionate influence since they are the only ones who are really burning."

"The West that preaches human rights hasn't done its homework," says James O'Dea, director of Amnesty International's Washington office. Although lauding the Clinton administration for proposing a high commissioner on human rights, he and others criticize the West for lagging in crucial early organizing of the world conference.

MELANIE STETSON FREEMAN – STAFF

QUITO, ECUADOR: *Citizens march to protest the 'disappeared people' in Ecuador on May 1st, International Labor Day. Asia, Africa, and Latin America have held advance meetings to develop strategies for the UN-sponsored civil rights conference being held in Vienna June 14-25.*

Only three of five UN regions held meetings in advance of the world conference: Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Western Europe (a grouping that includes the US) and Eastern Europe did not.

Little coordination

The lack of Western meetings has made it difficult for rights groups to coordinate with Western governments to counter efforts to water down UN rights activism and the final Vienna conference statement.

"It's possible when everyone gets to Vienna you'll have a wide open fight over the wording of the final document, unless something happens in between," said an observer close to the Geneva talks, who asked not to be named.

A preview of arguments likely to be heard in Vienna came at the Asian regional meeting in Bangkok in March. The delegates spoke glowingly of the region's and their governments' support for universal human rights.

But while such speeches often began well, they often concluded that individual rights were secondary to "community rights" and "the right to [economic] development," activists say.

"It is our hope that this meeting in Bangkok will produce a strong collective voice from Asia, giving a clear signal of our unequivocal commitment to ... the promotion and pursuit of human rights, human dignity, and the essential worth of the human person," said Dato' Zainal Abidin Alias, Malaysia's lead delegate.

Later in the speech, however, he stated: "There is as yet no consensus as to the totality of human rights." And further on: "While we recognize the rights of the individual, these rights are not in splendid isolation from those of the community."

But Ross Hynes, human rights coordinator for Canada's Ministry of External Affairs, wonders "what does cultural particularity mean for the respect for women's rights where you have very strong Islamic movements?"

Nations' rights

Developing countries argue that a nation's "right to economic development" is at least equal to individual "civil and political rights" cherished and promoted by developed nations. But economic rights are often used as a rationale to deny basic civil rights, activists counter.

S. Wiryono, Indonesia's lead delegate to the Bangkok meeting declared in a speech to the other 49 nations that freedom from illiteracy and hunger should come ahead of political freedoms.

"The full realization of civil and political rights without the enjoyment of economic, social, and cultural rights is impossible," he said. His comments were echoed by China, Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore, and Iran.

"On one side is the West affirming universality," says Amnesty's O'Dea, "and the developing governments responding: 'You all can't come over with your Cadillac approach, putting down your window and telling us we need to worry about political and civil rights when you yourselves don't recognize economic, social, and cultural rights."

The Clinton administration seems set to try to silence the Asian argument that it has a bias toward civil and political rights, while ignoring economic and cultural rights. US officials say the administration will likely push for Senate ratification of several already-signed treaties, including: the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights; the Inter-American Human Rights Declaration, and accords banning discrimination based on gender and race.

But while many foresee gains on women's rights, there will not be much progress on creating a high commissioner on human rights or an international penal court, worries Mr. Brody of the International Human Rights Law Group. He expects a weak statement to cap the conference.

"What we need is a strong public commitment from the Western nations and from the US government at a high level that they see the world conference as a step in expanding UN enforcement of human rights," Brody says. "We need a breakthrough. We can't just have these fuzzy statements."

Higher costs are forcing Swedes to rethink their prized medical-care system; but even reformers say it should still provide equal service to all

Sweden Reforms Health Care

By Howard LaFranchi
Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

STOCKHOLM

EVEN as the Clinton administration prepares to announce a national health-care plan, Sweden – a country whose name is synonymous with universally available, publicly provided, and virtually free medicine – is busy reforming the excesses and shortcomings of its system.

After decades of state-run medicine, when Swedes were told the kind of care they would receive and from whom, people here are demanding more say. Accommodating this demand is opening a door to reforms that are making Swedish health care more efficient and cost-conscious.

"People are now able to choose the doctor and clinic they want," says Göran Radö, undersecretary of state at the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs. "Providing that choice has meant increasing competition [among care providers], and that has led to a more efficient and responsive system."

Not everyone is convinced that making this transition from a top-down system to one that places the patient at the center of decisionmaking can be done without lowering the general quality of care. Some doctors worry that competition for patients will lead to a mix of questionable, people-pleasing approaches with health-threatening shortcuts. Medical researchers are concerned that their role will be reduced in the drive for efficiency.

What no one questions is the basic principle of Swedish health care: to provide quality care under equal conditions for the entire population. Yet even as Swedes remain supportive of this pillar of their welfare state, they are implementing ways to make the system serve the public – and not the other way around – while reducing waste and cutting costs.

Old assumptions challenged

For decades health-care coverage was consistently expanded, with more and better being the constant goals. But with Sweden facing the same recession and budgetary constraints as other European countries, old assumptions about universal care are being challenged.

One area facing close scrutiny is the cost and availability of prescription drugs, especially high-cost brand-name products. The wisdom and cost-efficiency of certain operations for a rapidly aging population is another.

"We are used to being able to afford everything, but we can't any longer," says Kaj Möllefors, a surgeon and chief executive of the Northwestern Health Board, a Stockholm County district health-care administration and one of the largest in Sweden's county-based system. "Our goal is to reduce costs, but in a way that increases the patient's choice in the health area."

Sweden – again like other European countries with socialized medicine – already spends less on health care than the United States. Health services account for about 8 percent of Sweden's GNP, compared with 14 percent in the US.

And unlike the US, almost all of Swedish health care is publicly provided: Until now, doctors, nurses, and other health providers have been public employees earning salaries set by the state. Doctors earn less than in the US – but they do not face the threat of large malpractice settlements, since Sweden's no-fault insurance system takes care of predetermined compensations in the event of error.

'Managed competition'

Partly because of the country's aging population – 18 percent of Swedes are over 65, with two-thirds of medical outlays here going for people over 80 – health-care costs have been rising. Sweden also has experienced a shift in thinking about the balance between state and individual responsibilities that has swept the health-care field.

Largely in response to these two factors, authorities are now implementing a Swedish version of "managed competition" – the Clinton administration's phrase for its plan to enlist the private medical sector in providing the newly insured with reasonably priced care. The difference is that here the "competition" for patients will remain largely among public health-care providers.

'We are used to being able to afford everything, but we can't any longer.'

– Kaj Möllefors, health-care administrator in Stockholm

"Freedom of choice in health care and long waiting lists because of low productivity in the medical profession were two recurring themes of the 1991 election campaign," says Mr. Radö, the ministry official.

Those were the same elections that spelled defeat for the Social Democrats, who had been in power for most of the previous 60 years, and under whose reign the health-care system was developed.

Last year Stockholm County was the first to change regulations so that hospitals and clinics receive funds based on services provided, not simply according to a predetermined budget. Productivity has skyrocketed, and waiting lists have plummeted.

Nationally, new regulations allow residents facing more than a three-month wait for an operation to go to another county – and the home county is billed for the service.

"In the first three months our orthopedic clinic experienced a 40 percent rise in productivity," Mr. Möllefors says. "Now we have no lines, and you could say we now have a lack of patients."

The new system has revealed an excess of medical facilities and specialists, Möllefors says. "After just one year we've realized we [in Stockholm County] have about a 30 percent overcapacity in surgery, the same in maternity. We're going to close one or two clinics." The same magnitude of overcapacity is generally true nationwide, he adds.

General practitioners are in short supply, however. "We are very concerned about medical overtreatment," Möllefors says. "We want to place more emphasis on preventive care."

One goal being discussed is to more than double the number of general practitioners, to 1 for every 2,000 people. While Sweden has had trouble attracting doctors to general practice in the past, the proposal under discussion would allow doctors to "work on their own," Radö says, rather than as salaried county employees.

Independence rather than pay levels is the key to attracting doctors to the plan, Radö adds. "We expect the new system to offer greater freedom to doctors, an idea many of them support."

Doctors leery

"The assumption seems to be that mercantile tendencies are always good, but in society that is not always so," says Ingvar Krakau, director of the Sollentuna Hospital and Primary Care Center in Stockholm's northwest district. "The new system is based on competition between individual doctors. And when we're trying to encourage primary care that depends a lot on doctors working together, it doesn't seem to be the right idea."

Others say they are not so sure the emphasis on general practitioners in the long run will prove to be as cost-efficient as expected.

"I don't think increasing the availability of GPs is really so useful," says Ter Gellstrom, director of surgery at Stockholm's famed Karolinska Hospital, where the Nobel prize in medicine is awarded. "If the GP can't handle something, then the patient comes here anyway, so you end up with two layers."

Despite some grumblings about the reforms, satisfaction remains high in Sweden's basic system. One thing cost-conscious administrators and reform-fearing doctors seem to agree on is that they do not want to go toward a US health-care system, which they see as focusing on those who can pay.

"[The US] has excellent capacity and providers, but those have to be used in a more equal way," Möllefors says. "I know that sounds socialistic, which is the opposite of my political beliefs, but the advantage of our system is still that it doesn't matter who you are or what you own, you get the same service."

Swedes Try Privately Run Child Care

STOCKHOLM

THE Ask & Embla child-care center in Stockholm's Sodermalm neighborhood looks much like hundreds of day-care centers in Sweden. Children's artwork covers the walls. Groups play ball, listen to a story, or paint.

Though it might not look it, Ask & Embla is part of a revolution in Swedish child care. Unlike more than 95 percent of the country's child-care centers, Ask & Embla is privately, not publicly, operated.

"We were feeling the quality going down" in public child care, says Thomas Sehlan, one of three former public day-care workers who this year took over three public child-care sites. "Here we can make our own decisions ... and take money that before was put into administration and make better use of it here."

Ask & Embla is one example of privatization in Sweden's extensive social welfare network. As the country tries to reduce welfare-state costs, while increasing citizens' involvement in shaping services, interest in the role of the private sector has grown.

Sweden is not questioning the principles of one of the most liberal child-care policies in the world, including low-cost child care for pre-schoolers and parental leave that guarantees a new mother (or father) 90 percent of salary during a child's first year.

But Sweden's budget deficit, unmet child-care demand, and mounting dissatisfaction with public options have encouraged the private experiments.

In 1985 the Swedish parliament voted to make child care available to all children between 18 months and six years by 1991. But the state could not keep up with demand. Opportunities outside the public system were expanded in 1991 to include private companies and churches.

State funding for child-care contracts are set to slip 5 percent in the fall – part of Sweden's deficit-cutting process.

"If we had stayed public," says Ask & Embla's co-owner Lennart Bucht, "these cuts would have meant our quality would be going down."

Some supporters of Sweden's public-sector tradition have criticized the private experiments as elitist and profit-motivated. "For them it's ideological," says co-owner Kerstin Bloomberg. "They think if this is private enterprise we must be looking to make money." But parents coming to Ask & Embla pay their share of child care expenses (about $1,200 annually) according to what they can.

Ask & Embla's owners say the test of their success will come in September, when parents decide where to enroll their children. "We may be the owners, but we see the parents every day, and they let us know what they like and don't like," Mr. Sehlan says.

– H. L.

ECONOMY

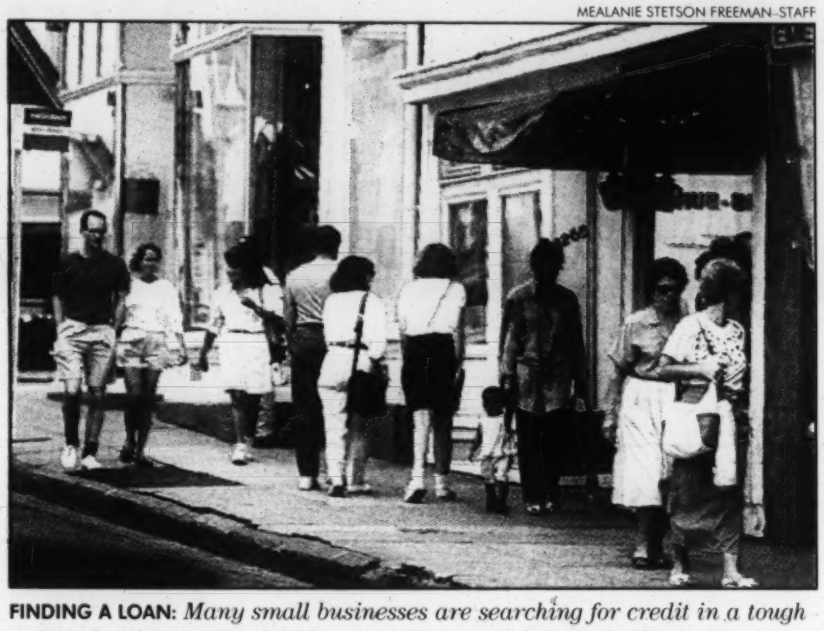
Small Businesses Seek More Government Loans

Senate will soon consider additional funding for SBA

By Scott Pendleton
Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

AUSTIN, TEXAS

MEALANIE STETSON FREEMAN-STAFF



FINDING A LOAN: *Many small businesses are searching for credit in a tough economic climate. Pictured here are Georgetown shops in Washington.*

SMALL businesses and their lenders are hoping the Senate will act soon to grant supplemental funding for the Small Business Administration's loan program. In an era of tight bank credit, the SBA program is increasingly popular as a source of cash for entrepreneurs, who are the economy's best hope for economic growth and job creation.

This week the Senate marked up a bill that has already passed the House. It would grant another $181 million to guarantee $3.3 billion in loans to be made before the 1993 fiscal year ends Sept. 30

Under the SBA's 7(a) program, the government guarantees 75 to 90 percent of loans up to $750,000. The term of the loans averages more than 11 years.

In fiscal year 1992, the SBA backed a record $5.62 billion in loans. Only enough money was appropriated to back $3.6 billion in loans this year, and that ran out April 27. Applications have continued to be processed at the rate of 100 a day, but are being held pending the authorization.

Douglas Kadison, chairman of Horizon Savings Association in Austin, Texas, says typical SBA borrowers are "a little younger. Their cash flows are a little more needy of extended terms."

"Obviously, the last several years there's just been a shortage of credit, so some people who wouldn't otherwise use the program used it," Mr. Kadison adds.

Indeed, demand has soared as federal bank regulators reacted to a slew of collapses by forcing lenders to improve the quality – reduce the risk – in their portfolios. But banks have found that regulators are happy when loans are guaranteed by the SBA. Even though it makes the banks safer, taxpayers remain at risk.

Costs to the taxpayer

In the mid-1980s, the Reagan administration, with the backing of the 600,000-member National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB), tried twice to kill the SBA. Ten percent of loans went into default, four times as many as for a badly managed bank. David Stockman, Ronald Reagan's first budget director, called the SBA a "rathole."

Congress refused to let the agency perish, but lending standards were tightened. Direct loans have ceased. For every $100 of bank loans guaranteed by the SBA, the taxpayer lost $4.05 through defaults in 1987. That figure has fallen every year to $2.14 in fiscal year 1992. One in four delinquent loans is worked out and made current. With administrative and other costs thrown in, taxpayers spend $5 to $5.50 per $100 of guarantees.

The loans nourish fast-growing businesses that would not otherwise exist, says SBA spokesman Mike Stamler. Studies have shown that, if credited against the program's cost, the taxes collected from those businesses and their employees would make the SBA show a profit, he says.

Austin-based Mytech Corporation is an example. In 1987 electrical engineer Doug Myron decided to go into business making motion-sensors that turn off lights in an empty room. But the oil crash of 1986 had given Texas banks wobbly knees. His garage-based startup could get no loan. "We were too high-risk," he says.

Horizon Savings was founded the same year, but in the prevailing economic climate any lending looked dangerous. "We weren't quite sure what to do, but we knew that the more we did, the worse it would be," Kadison says. Horizon decided on a strategy of diversification among loan and deposit types, essentially becoming a small community banker. Its activities included making SBA-backed loans, which had fallen out of favor at other institutions, including one for $60,000 to Mytech. "Without the 7(a) program there was no way we could get funding," Myron says.

Today Mytech has grown 840 percent and has 25 employees. Myron expects to do $2 million in business this year and to make the Inc. magazine list of 500 fastest-growing small private companies. Mytech is the third-largest company in the business, and the only one to make its product in the United States. "We're bucking the trend. We're providing manufacturing jobs," Myron says. Mytech returned to Horizon for three more SBA loans.

Outgrowing SBA loans

After one more loan, Myron thinks he will have reached the 7(a) program's $750,000 limit. "We can now wean ourselves from the SBA program," he says. Commercial banks have expressed an interest, but with the 50-percent annual growth he predicts for Mytech, Myron will probably need an infusion from venture capitalists first.

"I'm a real supporter" of the SBA loans, he concludes. Funding for $6.6 billion in loan guarantees is proposed for fiscal year 1994.

Terry Hill, a spokesman for the NFIB, says the organization still opposes the 7(a) loan program because it adds to the deficit, causing interest rates to rise for the more than 99 percent of small businesses not using the SBA. NFIB has not opposed the reauthorization, being more concerned about a Clinton-created climate of uncertainty that is making business reluctant to hire and take out bank loans. "Everything is more tax and more mandates," he says.

Sale of Savings Bonds Slides After Treasury Cuts Minimum Rate

By Guy Halverson
Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

NEW YORK

AFTER more than a year of skyrocketing success, the United States government's savings bond program is suddenly watching its sales plummet – the result of low interest rates and the inability of many Americans to save much.

The US Treasury announced this week that sales of US savings bonds fell to $787 million in May. That follows sales of $2.5-billion worth of bonds in January; $2 billion in February; $1.5 billion in March; and $920 million in April. The May sales are also 14 percent below sales of $916 million in May 1992.

The reason for the downturn, financial experts say, is clear. The Treasury cut the minimum guaranteed interest rate on savings bonds from 6 to 4 percent, March 1. That took away the interest rate advantage savings bonds had held last year over many alternative investments such as passbook accounts, money market accounts, and bank certificates of deposit.

The US savings bond program posted its best year ever in 1992, selling $18-billion worth of these bonds. The only year in the 1980s when savings bonds even approached that level was 1986, when the Treasury sold $12 billion in savings bonds. During the early 1980s sales ranged from $3 billion to $4 billion annually. In the later 1980s they remained around $7 billion.

Savings bonds held for five years or longer now earn either the minimum 4-percent rate or the average of market-based rates for that period – whichever is greater. From May 1 to Oct. 31, the market-based rate is 4.78 percent. Bonds purchased before March 1 retain their earlier guaranteed minimum rates, until they mature and enter a new extended-maturity period.

"We wouldn't say that the savings bond program is in a slump," says Sheila Nelson, a Treasury spokeswoman. "Just through May alone, the Treasury sold over $7-billion worth of savings bonds, which is equal to most years in the late 1980s." Still, she concedes, "there has been a drop in sales." The Treasury will monitor that situation closely, she says.

The total value of US savings bonds held by Americans was $166 billion at the end of May, up from $144 billion in May 1992.

Apart from the decline in the guaranteed interest rate, some financial analysts say many Americans find it hard to save. That may be particularly true for wage earners in lower income brackets, who tend to be among the main purchasers of savings bonds, usually through company-sponsored payroll deduction plans. The Federal Reserve announced this week that consumer debt rose $2.3 billion in April, less than the $3-billion rise in March. April was the ninth straight month that consumer debt increased.

The modern savings bond program goes back to May 1, 1944, when President Franklin Delano Roosevelt bought the first Series E bond from then-Treasury Secretary Henry Morgenthau Jr.dd

The program was changed in the early 1980s, when the Series E bond was replaced by the Series EE bond. The Treasury also began a market-based interest rate system, guaranteeing a minimum rate or a market-based rate for bonds held five years, or longer, using whichever rate is higher.

Although savings bonds have frequently drawn the ire of financial planners because of their relatively low yields, they have enjoyed widespread popularity among millions of Americans who would not otherwise have a formal savings program.

"For many Americans, the savings bond program represents a form of forced savings that ensures the savings will be there when needed," says Donald Danko, editor of "Better Investing," a monthly investment magazine published by the National Association of Investors Corporation, in Royal Oak, Mich.

The reporting of interest can be deferred until the bonds are actually cashed. In most cases the bonds are exempt from state and local taxes on income and personal property. The savings bond program is thus a very "practical" program, Mr. Danko says. If people invest over a period of 10 or 20 years, they would be wise to purchase common stocks, either individually or through a mutual fund, Danko adds. Stocks tend to pay higher yields than other investments over the long term.

FOOD

Madeleines
(from La Tour Rose)

Softened butter and flour for Madeleine molds
1 cup flour
2-1/3 cups confectioner's sugar
1/2 cup finely ground almonds
1-1/4 cups sweet butter, melted and lightly browned
1 tablespoon honey
9 large egg whites

Preheat oven to 375 degrees F. Brush madeleine molds with softened butter, then dust lightly with flour. Sift together flour and confectioner's sugar. Stir in almonds. Blend in melted butter and honey. Beat egg whites until just frothy. Gently stir egg whites into flour mixture until batter is smooth. If desired, batter may be refrigerated for 1/2 hour to thicken it. Spoon batter into molds, filling 2/3 full. Bake for 12-15 minutes. Serve warm. Makes 36.

Herbed Fromage Blanc Salad
(from Léon de Lyon)

This salad is served at the end of a meal, as a cheese course.

1/4 lb. fromage blanc
1/8 lb. crème fraîche
1 shallot, peeled and finely chopped
1 teaspoon fresh chervil, chopped
2 teaspoons fresh parsley, chopped
1 tablespoon fresh chives, chopped
VINAIGARETTE
1 tablespoon wine vinegar
3 tablespoons oil
1/4 teaspoons salt or to taste
1/8 teaspoon pepper or to taste

Mix fromage blanc with herbs and shallots. Set aside. Whip crème fraîche in mixer bowl until consistency of whipped cream, being careful not to overbeat. Add fromage blanc mixture to crème fraîche. Gently mix together on low speed. Remove from bowl and chill until serving. Blend together oil and vinegar and season to taste. Drizzle cheese with vinegarette. Serve with toast or crackers. Serves 4.

– Recipes provided by the restaurant chefs and adapted by Jenna Holst

Chefs seek a balance in adhering to high standards despite France's flagging economy

Lyon's Starred Restaurants Strive To Keep Patrons

By Howard LaFranchi
Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

LYON, FRANCE

STARS are dimming across France, some are even going out – but the phenomenon is less the concern of astronomists than of gastronomists.

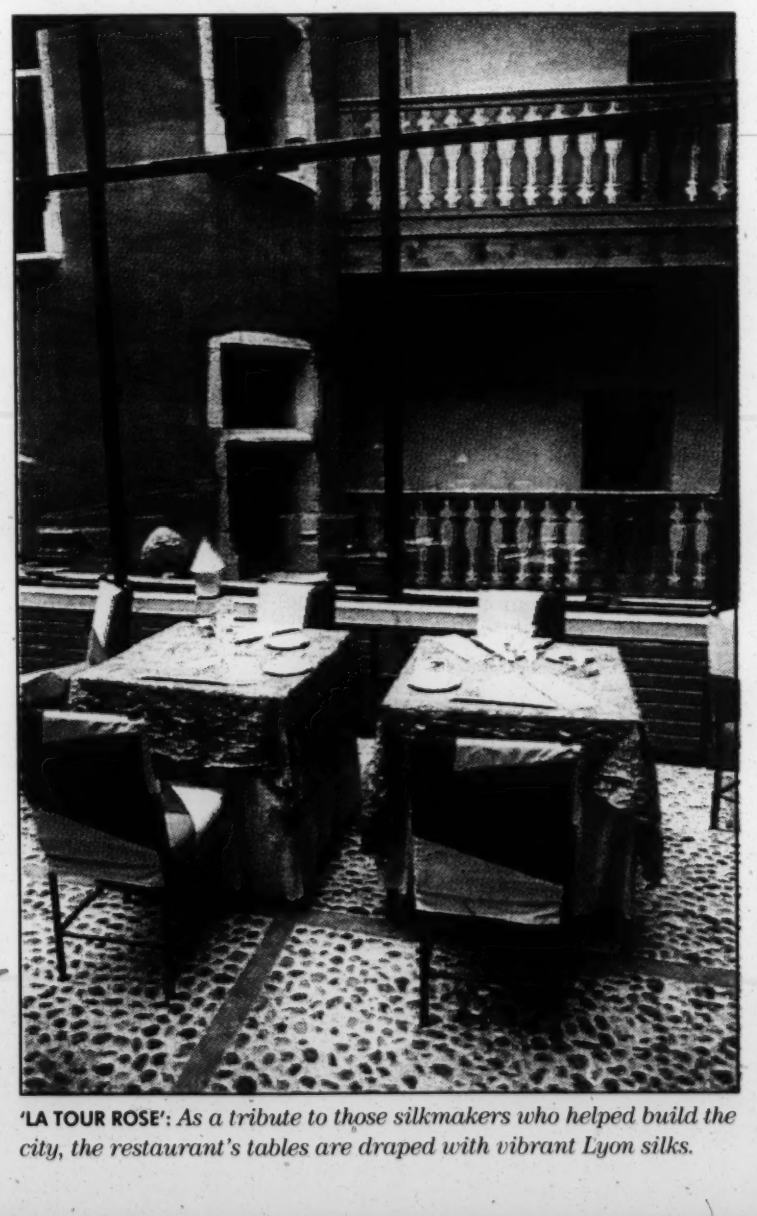
France's troubled stars are not in the sky, but in its restaurants, in some cases among the most reputed. And the disturbance they are experiencing is not atmospheric, but economic.

The economic downturn that has the French clutching their purse strings and prompted them to vote heavily for the right in the recent national elections is also affecting the country's dining habits.

Where the hustle of the 1980s had already taken its toll on the French executive's typical two-hour-plus lunch, the gloom of the early '90s has produced a preoccupation with cutting back. Even France's new premier, Edouard Balladur, greeted new government employees on their first day of work with a Spartan two-course lunch.

And all the cutting – whether on the family budget, on CEO perks, or on the national deficit – has caused a drop in the patronage of France's expensive tables.

As Christian Millau, director of the well-known Gault-Millau restaurant guide, noted recently, the economy is letting French restaurateurs know, and not so subtly, that it is no longer feasible to lay on the table a bill totaling 800 francs ($145) per person.



'LA TOUR ROSE': *As a tribute to those silkmakers who helped build the city, the restaurant's tables are draped with vibrant Lyon silks.*

The message came home to Le Duc d'Enghien in the Paris region, which despite its two Michelin stars and three Gault-Millaut "toques" turned off the stoves for good in March. In Lille in the north, two of the city's premier establishments, Le Restaurant and Flambard, closed recently after the number of business lunches and dinners fell off. The story is similar in many French cities.

Here in Lyon, a city that is internationally known as a culinary center, and whose tradition is kept alive by such legendary chefs as Paul Bocuse, the situation is somewhat less bleak. Foreigners still visit Lyon expecting to plunk down a good chunk of their food budget to experience what has made the city's gastronomic reputation. The locals have a long tradition of dining out regularly and tend to remain faithful to a favored chef.

Still, no one can ignore the signs of the times. At two highly regarded yet very different Lyonnais tables – Léon de Lyon in central Lyon and La Tour Rose across the Saône River in the medieval Saint Jean quarter – steps are being taken to watch the budget of both the restaurant and the diner, while making sure that quality is not affected.

"We're a business, and we have to keep an eye on the economic downturn, but we also have to remember that the Lyonnais are demanding, difficult, and connoisseurs when it comes to fine cuisine," says Jean-Pierre Lacombe, chef-owner of Léon de Lyon. "Chefs in other regions cringe when someone arrives at their restaurant announcing, 'Careful, I'm from Lyon!' but that's what we live with all the time."

At La Tour Rose, chef-owner Philippe Chavent says the only effective measures are those that result in boosting patronage, because "the ingredients, even when they're the best, aren't really that big a part of our overall costs."

What is expensive is the staff it takes to run a fine restaurant – 35 employees at Léon de Lyon. And just as in other business sectors, recent emphasis has been placed on keeping the staff productive.

BOTH restaurants have smaller, less-expensive bistros adjacent to draw diners who have neither the time nor the budget for a $100 meal.

At Mr. Chavent's Comptoir du Boeuf, just across the street from the main restaurant, a traditional Lyonnais lunch of *boeuf bourguignon* and fresh pasta costs under $20. Right next door to Léon de Lyon, the Petit Lyon serves lunches featuring quenelles and other Lyonnais specialties in a family atmosphere and with an average cost of about $20 – one-fifth the cost of an average meal in the main restaurant.

"We came up with the Petit Léon as a way to hold on to our team," says Mr. Lacombe. "If

PHOTOS BY MELANIE STETSON FREEMAN – STAFF

PARENT AND OFFSPRING: *Recently opened Petit Léon, above, offers budget-conscious diners a meal one-fifth the cost ($20 per person), of the main restaurant, Léon de Lyon. At left, director Paul Barral (l.) poses in front of one of 50 chef portraits hanging on the walls of Léon de Lyon.*

Two Top Draws Among Lyon's Culinary Oasis

Léon de Lyon boasts fine regional fare in a refined setting

IS chef Jean-Pierre Lacombe's use of simple regional produce like the *crosne* a sign of the times?

Crosne – a crunchy white tuber, commonly called a Chinese artichoke and pronounced "krone" – is "a poor man's vegetable that people used quite a bit during the war," says one of the hostesses at Léon de Lyon. "It's something we're getting back to."

Yet while these may be hard times for France's fine restaurants, one wouldn't know it from a recent evening at Léon. The elegant yet warm dining rooms were full of a mix of locals and visitors, many of them crunching happily on crosnes and *cardons* – edible thistle stock, another resurrected local product – that join onions, truffle, marrow, and *foie gras* in out-of-this-world ravioli.

Léon de Lyon is situated on a hard-to-find side street in central Lyon's peninsula between the Rhône and Saône rivers, in a spot where a restaurant has stood for 90 years.

It is classic Lyon without being stuffy. If the warm reception at the door doesn't convince the diner, surely the sight of a $15 child's menu among all the $30 à la carte dishes will.

Recently redecorated in light-colored woods and pale-spring yellows, the restaurant also hosts a gallery of 50 paintings, both old and new, of chefs. It's worth arriving early or staying late, whether at lunch or dinner, just to get a good look at the art.

"We're gradually adapting our menu to our more refined setting," Mr. Lacombe says. "But at the same time keeping the Lyonnais traditions as the basis. I'm very drawn to regional cuisine."

Regional dishes – a meadow salad of dandelions, crosnes, and cardons, a brain-and-tongue appetizer, the classic pig's feet – are indicated on the menu by an asterisk. But the exotic fare doesn't stop there.

Soft-boiled eggs with sea urchin or a half-cooked flan with generous truffle shavings might start the meal, which might continue with an entrée of range chicken on a vinegar-sauce bed, Lacombe's Lyonnais ravioli, or a fillet of French Charolais beef.

And diners would be well advised to save room for one of a bewildering variety of desserts. Chocolate lovers will be drawn to the plate of six (six!) bitter chocolate creations, including a chocolate macaroon, two mousses, an orange cream between chocolate wafers, and a chocolate *crème brûlée*. At $13 it may sound a little steep, but compared with Paris restaurants that are charging $15 for a dish of homemade ice cream, it looks like a bargain.

Phillippe Chavent's La Tour Rose breaks from tradition

IF it weren't for the wealthy and industrious silkmakers of Lyon's past, says Phillipe Chavent, Lyon would not be the gastronomic capital it is today.

To pay tribute to those silkmakers who helped build Lyon, the chef-owner of La Tour Rose has draped the tables of his second-floor greenhouse restaurant with vibrant Lyon silks. Together with the triangular presentation plates and stunning glassware that complete the table, the diner has a foretaste of the adventure that comes with a meal at La Tour Rose.

Crunchy, pungent, deep-fried fresh herbs as an *amuse-bouche*, poached eggs in a sea-urchin sauce – the purple tint comes from the boiled sea-urchin shell – crowned by a nest of quick-fried beet strips: That's how a meal might begin.

A meal might begin with crunchy, pungent, deep-fried fresh herbs, poached eggs in a sea-urchin sauce – the unusual purple tint comes from the boiled sea-urchin shell – crowned by beet strips.

"People always associate Lyon with *quenelles* [a seasoned dumpling with minced meat or fish], *andouillettes* [sausage], and *gras double* [tripe], but I think that the provinces have the right to attempt something else," Mr. Chavent says.

Going against the flow is not always easy in a conservative city like Lyon, and the iconoclastic Chavent, despite his 15 years here, has not been easily accepted into Lyon's circle of renowned chefs.

Still, while his tables, and the 12 rooms of his hotel, tip their hat to the long line of Lyonnais silkmakers, the concessions to tradition pretty much stop there.

Next comes a generous pigeon breast wrapped in Chinese cabbage with a small-vegetable-and-truffle sauce, or sautéed duck liver and red mullet fillets on a bed of lentils with garlic. And with each course the plates change, from clear and simple to a blue baroque design or a pink sphere with red and gray splatterings.

Desserts range from a bergamot cream ("I'm becoming increasingly interested in experimenting with the bitter taste," says Chavent) served with a warm honey madeleine, to a chocolate macaroon with coffee cream sauce, or perhaps a peach caramel Bavarian cream, a house specialty.

For those who can't make up their minds, never fear: "Many of our guests try three desserts," a waiter says.

– H. L.

at Léon we only serve 15-20 people at lunch, we couldn't justify keeping the 35 employees we nevertheless need."

Both chefs have experimented with different ideas for drawing more lunchtime clients to the main restaurants. Chavent simply knocks 20 percent off the lunchtime tab (the same menu is offered for lunch and dinner) and he says "the word gets around." He tried a $30 lunch menu, but found it attracted few new diners – "Most people would end up choosing à la carte anyway" – while actually putting off others. "People didn't like the idea that there was this special offer to eat at the Tour Rose at a discount."

Léon de Lyon does offer a 250-franc ($46) *prix fixe* lunch, however, and finds that it serves its purpose. "It's our way of doing a little advertising," says Léon maitre d' Paul Barral. "People try us for lunch at that price, then they want to return some time for dinner."

In addition to the Petit Lyon, Lacombe and a partner have opened several small and relatively inexpensive restaurants on Lyon's rue Mercière – formerly a street of low repute that has now been transformed, largely as a result of Lacombe's initiatives, into a popular dining and pedestrian shopping area.

And in the innovation department, Chavent offers a 50-percent reduction to students during a "week of taste" in October.

"The idea is to develop a new generation of fine diners," he says, "rather than just throwing in the towel to the onslaught of McDonald's."

What neither Lacombe nor Chavent has quite figured out, however, is how to draw back the steady stream of business diners, especially at lunch, that for so long were a pillar of French high-end restaurants.

"At one time they made up 80 percent of our clientele," Chavent says wistfully.

The truth is that with changing business practices, the regular two-hour, four-star lunch may never return. Fortunately for chefs like Lacombe and Chavent, however, France will always have a place for its culinary stars.

ARTS

Spoleto Festival USA Turns Up New Talent

Gian Carlo Menotti's new opera, 'The Singing Child,' debuts with two 11-year-old boy sopranos in the key roles

MARTHA SWOPE

'PANORAMA': *The Martha Graham Dance Company in a 1992 performance choreographed by Graham in 1935 for 33 women, revived for the 1993 festival.*

By Nick Rossi
Special to The Christian Science Monitor

CHARLESTON, S.C.

ADVENTURESOME programming coupled with the appearance of frequently unknown talent makes the annual Spoleto Festival USA one of the most exciting festivals in the United States.

Highlights of this season include the US première of Alexander von Zemlinsky's one-act 1922 opera, "The Birthday of the Infanta"; a performance of Martha Graham's "Maple Leaf Rag" (a dance inspired by her 1990 visit to Charleston, S.C.); and a brand new opera, "The Singing Child," composed by the festival's founder, Gian Carlo Menotti.

Included among the youthful talent have been tremendously gifted performers such as tenor Robert Brubaker, violinist Joshua Bell (discovered in a previous Spoleto festival), and soprano Alessandra Marc.

The 1993 "Festival of Joy" (to use Menotti's phrase) opened Memorial Day weekend, and before its conclusion this Sunday, will have presented 668 artists in 118 events spread across 17 days: performances of 214 different works, including three operas, 18 dances, a play, 67 songs, a film score, 30 pieces of chamber music, 13 choral works, 26 orchestral compositions, and 57 jazz pieces.

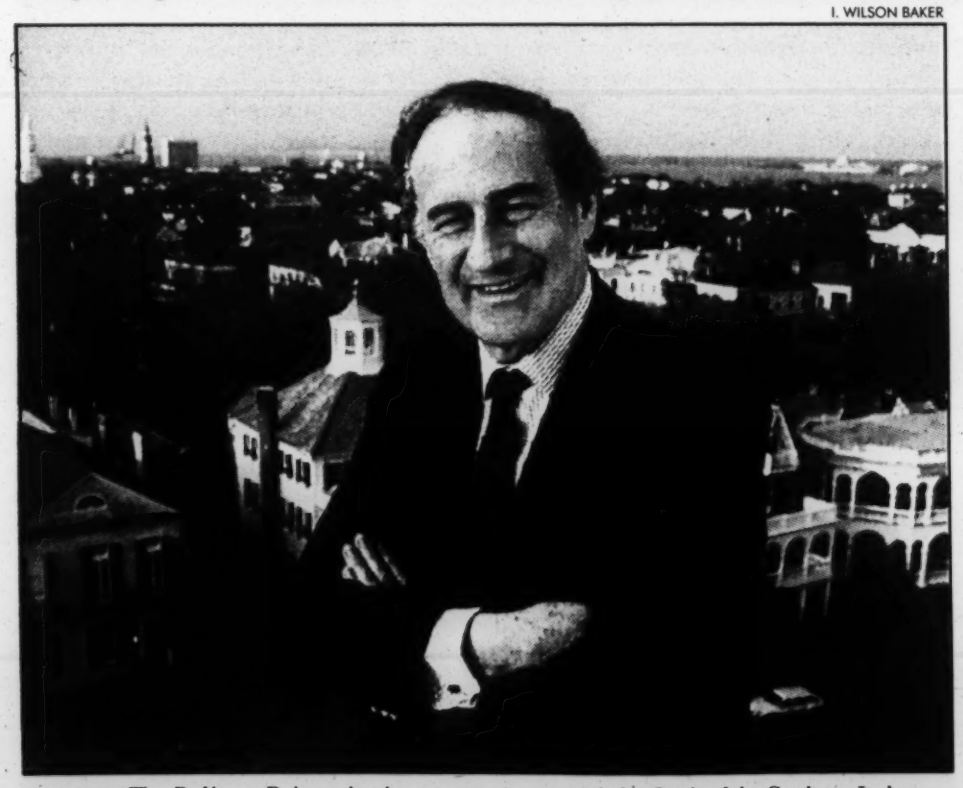
In addition to the lively arts, visitors can view 149 drawings and paintings or attend lectures, lecture-demonstrations, and interviews with such personalities as Ginger Rogers and Maestro Menotti himself.

The opening night concert introduced Steven Mercurio as the new music director of both the American and Italian Spoleto festivals. (He is currently principal conductor of the Opera Company of Philadelphia.) The program began appropriately with a bright, brash reading of Charles Ives's "Decoration Day." Then followed a fiery, passionate performance of Tchaikovsky's "Violin Concerto" by Joshua Bell that twice brought the audience to its feet.

The second half of the evening featured the superb Westminster Choir in a deeply moving rendition of "The Power of Living" from Aaron Copland's opera, "The Tender Land"; and Alessandra Marc, a powerful young soprano, in an aria from Catalani's "La Wally" and the "Liebestod" from Wagner's "Tristan und Isolde."

A stunning performance of Martha Graham's "Panorama" – with a huge mobile in the style of Alexander Calder fluttering high overhead – introduced 33 dancers from the Martha Graham Ensemble augmented with students from her School for Contemporary Dance, all dressed in flowing, flame-red dresses designed by the late Miss Graham.

I. WILSON BAKER



MENOTTI: *The Pulitzer Prize-winning composer started the festival in Spoleto, Italy, and brought it to Charleston, S.C., in 1977. Behind him is the city's historic district.*

The performance of "Maple Leaf Rag" celebrated the International Graham Centennial. It was inspired by a Charleston joggling board – a long plank whose ends are anchored by posts on rockers (an early courting device found on many porches in Charleston). "Maple Leaf Rag" was Graham's last choreographed piece.

Following the appearance of her company at the 1990 Spoleto Festival, Graham requested that a joggling board be sent to her in New York. Around this piece of Charleston memorabilia, she created the lighthearted and whimsical dance to Scott Joplin's "Maple Leaf Rag." On stage, with Terese Capucilli and Floyd Flynn as its principal couple, it was a vibrant and vigorous piece filled with energy and humor.

The find of the year must surely be "The Birthday of the Infanta," a gorgeously melodic "tragic tale with music in one act," by Zemlinsky (Arnold Schoenberg's teacher and father-in-law). At once a great success throughout Germany and Austria following its 1922 première in Cologne, this opera by a Jewish composer was soon banned by the Nazis. Long forgotten, it made its reappearance in Hamburg in 1981, then was mounted for the Edinburgh Festival in 1983 (where Menotti rediscovered it) and the Vienna Festival of 1985.

A WORK of tremendous power and impact, Zemlinsky's score is intensely lyrical, a late-Romantic work whose "O maiden, take this glowing orange" is one of the great tenor arias of the century. Menotti directed the opera, based on Oscar Wilde's story of the same title, which tells of a spoiled Spanish princess and her birthday toy, an ugly misshapen dwarf who falls in love with her.

Robert Brubaker deserved his standing ovation for superb singing and his masterful portrayal of the tortured, heartbroken dwarf. Soprano Mary Dunleavy was a vocally satisfying Infanta but left something to be desired in her characterization of the spoiled princess. Her face and acting were much too serious at times. Marie Plette warmly portrayed the understanding maid, Ghita, the only person to see the dwarf's inner beauty.

The true hit of the festival is Menotti's new opera (finished at 5 p.m. the day before its first performance), "The Singing Child." It is a tender, poignant story of an 11-year-old boy left at home too often by his socialite parents. In loneliness, Jeremy creates an imaginary friend, a singing child. Together, they invent a musical language of their own while they play with toy trains and fight with wooden swords.

Beyond the humor built into the boys' musical roles, Menotti has given lush, broad melodic lines for the father and mother to sing, and wonderful little tidbits for Miss Potts, the baby sitter.

Scored for an orchestra of 13 players, Menotti's orchestral characterizations of the principals are deft: frequently catchy, sometimes petulant, often touching or pungent.

The vocal lines for the two 11-year-old boys are extremely difficult, often without accompaniment or pitch support. William Cole as Jeremy and Harold Haughton as the Singing Child, the two young men who sang these parts and who are in real life 11 years old – were outstanding. Haughton especially has a beautiful vocal instrument. Both boys kept near-perfect intonation on the melodic lines and were fine actors.

Federico Cortese conducted with great musical intelligence and perception. The father and mother were admirably sung by Ana Maria Martinez and Eric McClusky.

Denver Delivers First-Rate Plays

By Marilynne S. Mason
Special to The Christian Science Monitor

DENVER

LIKE other theater troupes in the country, the Denver Center Theatre Company is developing new plays – always risky and expensive, but badly needed if the theater is going to live on as a viable art form. Two of the three new plays just ending rival anything at the Humana Festival of New American Plays in Louisville, Ky., last spring.

The best of the three, if the most modest, is Lydia Stryk's "Monte Carlo." Its glamorous title belies its humble story about an elderly, working-class English woman who cares for her fragile mother. When Daisy wins the lottery, she quits her job at the factory. Friends seek her help.

THEATER

Daisy's own dreams lie beyond her squalid flat, and she takes her old mum to the Riviera. The older lady's complaints cease, and Daisy makes a painful discovery. This poignant little play is about mother-daughter relations, growing old with spirit, and the complexity of human relationships.

Terrific dialogue, brilliant performances by Georgine Hall and Frances Ingalls as Daisy and Mum, and a compassionate view of age and human nature kept the viewer invested in the outcome. Stryk sometimes falters when it comes to grappling with the meaning of Daisy's life. Yet there is some sense of the blessing her life has been and might still be because Daisy is supremely patient. The viewer comes away with an experience of a simple life lived in kindness.

"The Living" by Anthony Clarvoe is a far more ambitious, full-scale play. Beautifully written, directed and acted, "The Living" nevertheless seemed a bit ponderous, its humanism a bit tired. Based on diaries and official documents, the story unfolds in London in 1665, during an outbreak of the Black Plague. Everyone who can afford to leaves London for the country. But of those who stay, a few act heroically to help each other.

A young widow tries to escape London to continue to support her family. Turned back by frightened villagers, she returns to find her family has perished. The mayor of the city does what little good he can, keeps the order as best he can. A doctor stays behind to care for the sick. But the most interesting character is a lay scientist who studies statistics and shows people what can be learned from the science of numbers. "If you look at the numbers they tell you a story," he says. "One indication of the coming of plague is the coming of lies."

Political expediency denies the onslaught of disaster when everyone is too afraid to face the truth. It might as well have been about Nazi Germany or Mao's Cultural Revolution or even the McCarthy hearings, because the plague is a metaphor for any human calamity in which people have to be responsible to each other.

It's a hard night in the theater, with all the suffering on stage. Nevertheless, there is some light of understanding cast on the human condition in this play. That light concerns the simple heroism of people who do not abandon their fellows in the dark hours.

The productions were all first rate. Even the third play, a tiresome musical called "Bon Voyage" by Jeffrey Hatcher, with music and lyrics by the late Noel Coward, received a dazzling production. But somehow, that 1930's urbanity works only in movies made in that period.

DAN MCNEIL

'MONTE CARLO': *In Lydia Stryk's humble story, Georgine Hall (l.) plays an elderly English woman who cares for her mother, Frances Ingalls (r).*

COMMUNITY

Sharpening the Search For Missing Children

A calmer campaign has replaced the media hype of 10 years ago

By Marilyn Gardner
Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

BOSTON

ONE of the most heart-rending issues of the past decade – missing children – has undergone a quiet transformation. Instead of the near-hysteria that characterized the early 1980s, when media reports hyped inflated statistics, more reasonable attitudes prevail.

And instead of a scattershot approach to reporting and investigating cases, laws and national networks have adopted a unified approach that has increased the chances of finding children.

"If you think about 10 years ago and think about today, the changes are dramatic," says Ernie Allen, president of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children in Arlington, Va. "When a child disappears in America today, there is now a national system in place for exchanging information instantly and transmitting it around the country."

Recently, as missing-children agencies observed the 10th annual Missing Children's Day, Mr. Allen assessed the progress he and other advocates have made. In the early 1980s, he says, "You couldn't get missing-children information entered into the FBI's database." Then the Missing Children's Act, passed a decade ago, established procedures enabling parents of missing children to file information with the FBI so it can be fed into the bureau's National Crime Information Computer.

'When a child disappears in America today, there is now a national system in place for exchanging information ... and transmitting it around the country.'

– Ernie Allen

Ten years ago, most police departments stipulated a waiting period of 48 to 72 hours before a child over the age of 10 or 11 could be reported missing. "The attitude was, 'The kid's a runaway. Call me if he doesn't show up in two or three days,' " Allen says. Now reports can be entered immediately. Ten years ago, he adds, no state clearinghouses existed. Today there are 42, plus one in the District of Columbia.

People had no central telephone number to call a decade ago if they thought they had a lead. Today the national center, a nonprofit agency mandated by Congress, receives more than 600 calls daily. Many of those are tips or sightings that lead to the safe recovery of a child.

Other agencies also offer nationwide hot lines. Child Find in New Paltz, N.Y., for example, has helped locate more than 2,300 children in the past 13 years, according to executive director Carolyn Zogg.

In the early 1980s, Allen continues, it was "virtually impossible" to get courts to allow young children to testify in these cases. Now laws make it easier to do that, while still protecting children.

Other changes are evident in education programs for children. Earlier efforts emphasized "stranger danger." Today, realizing that most abductions are by noncustodial family members, educators work with children to lessen fear of abduction by strangers. One curriculum developed by the national center, called "Kids and Company Together for Safety," has been used in schools in 29 states. Material appropriate for each grade "is presented in a very positive, upbeat, colorful way," says Rona Zlokower, manager of community and government relations for Digital Equipment Corporation in Merrimack, N.H., underwriters of the project.

Even the milk-carton photographs of missing children – a national symbol in the 1980s – have disappeared in most areas. "We became concerned that we were creating too much fear at the breakfast table," Allen says. Now post cards asking, "Have you seen me?" go into 54 million homes a week. One out of every 7 children whose photographs appear on the cards is found, Allen says.

Instead of fingerprinting children, a widespread practice a decade ago, the newest tracking efforts involve photographs. "We tried to figure out from 10 years' experience what is the single most valuable thing a parent ought to have, in terms of safety," Allen says. "The answer is a good, clear, full-face photo, or a video. One of the most shocking things to me was that 40 to 50 percent of families of missing children did not have a good photo."

The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children and Polaroid Corporation has recently launched a nationwide effort called Project KidCare. It features a red and blue passport-size booklet for children that features space for information and photographs.

When Montgomery Ward conducted a pilot test of the project in its Chicago stores this spring, offering free Polaroid photographs of children, it drew 34,000 children in three weekends. Store executives are now expanding the program to more than 300 Montgomery Ward stores nationwide.

No one, of course, is pretending that the problem of missing children has been solved. Statistics released in 1990 by the US Department of Justice show that there are still as many as 350,000 children a year abducted by other family members, as many as 450,000 runaways, as many as 127,000 children abandoned by their families or kicked out, and about 300 kidnappings.

"We still have a long way to go," says Ivana DiNova, director of the Missing Child Help Center in Tampa. She wants the Missing Children's Act to be adopted by all states. She also points out the need for more police officers trained to deal with these cases.

Allen concurs, explaining that more than half the nation's police departments employ 10 or fewer officers and may not have specific expertise in this area. Still, noting that 70 percent of missing children have been found since 1990, he says, "This is not a gloom-and-doom situation. Most of these kids can be recovered, and most recoveries can be safe."

WORTH NOTING ON TV

By Elizabeth Levitan Spaid

■ THURSDAY

Hillary: America's First Lady *(NBC, 10-11 p.m.)*: "Today Show" co-host Katie Couric talks with Mrs. Clinton in a nationally broadcast in-depth TV interview. The discussion will revolve around her role in developing America's health-care plan, how she juggles her responsibilities, and how she is redefining the first lady's role. Mrs. Clinton also touches on subjects ranging from raising a teenager in the White House to her influence in the Clinton administration.

■ SATURDAY

Louie Anderson: Louie in St. Louie *(Showtime cable, 9:30-10:30 p.m.)*: Louie Anderson's routines combine honesty with laughter. He often confronts his tendency to overeat, as he does here with humorous sketches on his favorite foods. Some of his pet peeves (the government is one) are also part of the material.

■ SUNDAY

Brides of Christ *(A&E, 9-11 p.m.)*: From Australia comes a six-hour, three-part miniseries that centers around a group of nuns and girls in a Roman Catholic school during the 1960s. The series begins with the story of two young women who get the "call" to join a convent and don habits. It traces their journey and some of the trials they and their students encounter as they strive to understand and practice their faith. Later the series focuses on the mother superior, who struggles to incorporate the reforms mandated by Vatican II. "Brides of Christ" is more a sweet, gentle look at the personal dramas of a group of women than a deep story. This thoughtful series stars Brenda Fricker, who won an Oscar for her performance in "My Left Foot." As the strict, by-the-books Sister Agnes, she adds a strong presence to the well-acted program.

Please check local listings for all programs.

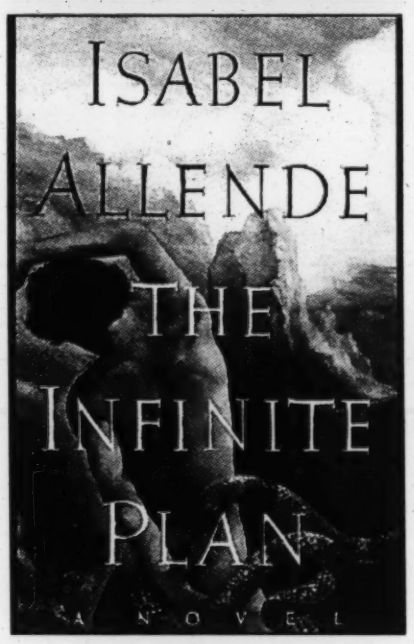
Unusual Characters Pursue Their Dreams

By Merle Rubin

"THE Infinite Plan" is Isabel Allende's fifth novel and her first to be set in the United States, where she now lives. The Chilean-born journalist and author received considerable attention for her previous books, "The House of the Spirits," "Of Love and Shadows," "Eva Luna," and "The Stories of Eva Luna," which found their way onto the bestseller lists.

Allende writes with passion and conviction, but her work has yet to demonstrate the consistent level of originality and craftsmanship that distinguishes consummate artist from aspiring author.

BOOKS



THE INFINITE PLAN
By Isabel Allende
Translated from the Spanish by Margaret Sayers Peden
HarperCollins
382 pp., $23

Her new novel, as its title suggests, is ambitious in scope, but merely competent in execution: a large canvas, filled with characters, action, and historical scenery that gives the impression of having been painted boldly and rather hurriedly.

Allende has wisely chosen an outstandingly atypical man to be the prototypically American hero of her story. The reader first meets Gregory Reeves as a little boy in the 1940s, traveling the country with his close-knit, eccentric family headed by his father, Charles Reeves, a self-styled artist and charismatic preacher who offers his audiences insights into the "divine plan."

Along with little Gregory and his older sister, Judy, this itinerant ménage includes two women: Charles Reeves's wife, Nora, a Russian Jewish immigrant with a passion for opera and a commitment to the tolerant teachings of the Bahai faith, and Nora's friend – and boisterous opposite – Olga, who supplements the family income working as a fortuneteller.

When Charles falls ill, the family road-show grinds to a halt in the barrio of East Los Angeles. The blonde, blue-eyed Reeves children grow up in this environment, warmly accepted by some, taunted and ostracized by others. Gregory learns to avoid – and when necessary face down – trouble. He also makes a friend for life in a neighborhood girl named Carmen.

The novel follows Gregory, Carmen, and Gregory's sister, Judy, through their teens and into their 50s. The focus is primarily on Gregory, who also narrates alternate sections of the story, but Carmen receives a sizable share of the attention as well.

Gregory manages to make his way to college and law school, only to be catapulted into the Vietnam War and unsought heroism. Judy endures bad husbands who leave her with children she cherishes. Carmen survives the stigma of an unwanted pregnancy and the dangers of an illegal abortion to become a compassionate artist, mother, and woman.

Gregory flounders for decades, dreaming of social justice in the 1960s, trying to forget the horrors of war in his blind pursuit of money and power in the early 1980s, failing to understand himself until he is well into his 40s. His inner conflicts are believably portrayed, with the unspoken but implicit suggestion that this one man's difficulties and protracted growing pains reflect the vicissitudes of his times and places.

Allende treads a fine line between writing expressively and resorting to overblown clichés: "... he had made himself a man," she writes of Gregory, "silently enduring repeated bumps and knocks along the way, faithful to the national myth of the independent, proud, and free individual. He considered himself a good citizen willing to pay his taxes and defend his country, but somewhere he had fallen into an insidious trap, and instead of living the expected reward he was still slogging through a swamp."

Admirers of Allende's earlier work may be a little disappointed by her lack of finesse in this one, but will still find much to engage mind and heart alike.

■ *Merle Rubin regularly reviews literature and contemporary fiction for the Monitor.*

When Students – and Parents – Graduate

FOR tuition-paying parents, there may be no sweeter music this time of year than the majestic strains of "Pomp and Circumstance," played while black-robed graduates file into an auditorium for commencement exercises. What other ceremony can produce quite the same combination of joy and relief as fathers and mothers watch sons and daughters stride across a stage to collect a piece of paper that has cost anywhere from $40,000 to more than $80,000, depending on the school? Bank accounts may be running on empty, but hearts are definitely full.

Like other ceremonies, commencement is a public event filled with private emotions. Increasingly, it has become a glamour industry as colleges and universities vie for high-profile speakers to bring added stature to their institutions. Yet however newsworthy these speeches by professional cheerleaders might be, the real drama of the day lies in the quiet stories tuition-payers themselves could tell about the trials and triumphs involved in shepherding their children along a 17-year educational journey that begins with the first day of kindergarten and ends with this ceremony.

MARILYN GARDNER

On a rainy Sunday afternoon in June, the president of one Midwestern college pays tribute to this monumental effort by telling the assembled commencement guests: "In a very real sense, parents have provided the support that has made this ceremony possible."

Students, too, acknowledge that help. Beyond the obvious pride they take in introducing their parents to classmates during weekend activities, several devise more public gestures of appreciation. One graduate uses orange tape to spell a message to her parents on the top of her mortarboard – "I [heart] U M&D." Another accepts her diploma, then turns to the audience and calls out, "I did it, Mom!"

At the end of the ceremony, as jubilant members of the Class of 1993 file out of the auditorium, cameras flash. Video cameras whirr. Families cheer. At the same time, a question hangs in the air: What next?

According to one career counselor here, 20 percent of these newly minted graduates have found a job or an internships that could lead to permanent employment. For the remaining 80 percent, there are still résumés to send out, calls to make, interviews to arrange.

Despite predictions by economists about tight labor markets, this generation of graduates may be better equipped for job hunting than their parents were at the same age. They are savvy about writing cover letters and résumés. They have learned about networking and researching prospective companies. Even their somber black caps and gowns cannot hide the youthful energy and optimism that will help to carry them through this and other transitions.

Later, as students pack their belongings and prepare to leave the comforting familiarity of this campus launching pad, dormitories and parking lots become the setting for tearful farewells. And as cars loaded with a four-year accumulation of possessions – among them the stereos, computers, televisions, and even microwaves that have become standard equipment for students – leave campus for the last time and head into the future, another question arises: Commencement speakers may exhort new graduates to "go for it," but who speaks to the parents? Who tells them that from this day forth they too are about to face a new beginning of their own?

For on those June afternoons that campuses appear to be created for, old alliances are loosened, new alliances are formed, and it is the parent rather than the child who may be more affected. The supporting parent now is subtly recast as supportive parent. The old vertical relationship – parent-child – begins its modification into a horizontal relationship between equals: two adults, with maybe the younger adult more equal. The parents – still needing to be needed – will be the ones waiting for the phone to ring. But when it does, when the parents are sought out, they will feel the new pleasure of knowing their child is turning to them as a matter of choice rather than out of necessity.

In the time it takes to snap a graduation picture, two generations start to redefine themselves, and the family too while they're at it. Not a bad afternoon's work, as higher education goes.

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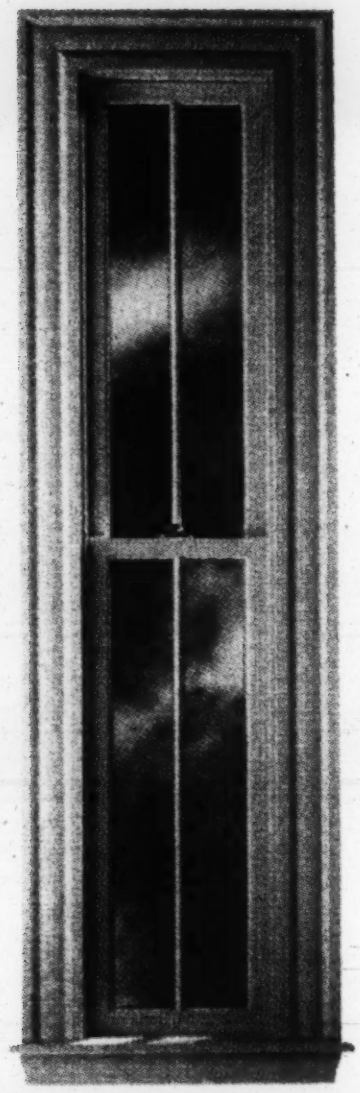

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The World Framed By a Window

Photograph by staff photographer Melanie Stetson Freeman

Through gauzy curtains: the old town in Warsaw.

LENS AND LIGHT

WHETHER in a painting or a photograph, a window is a powerful image. The elements are simple and ordinary – light, a frame, perhaps a scene. But they can evoke deep responses. As a subject of art, a window is often a metaphor for a way of seeing: It suggests an opening, possibilities, a means of focusing, the fact of light. A window can hint at a human yearning for illumination. Through a window, light is given shape so that poured into a room it seems both transcendent and touchable.

There's an intriguing aesthetic to the Melanie Stetson Freeman photograph on this page. We are drawn into translucent curtains floating in a border of thick blackness. The black-and-white medium creates a somber, formal effect. As a window on a window, it implies a subjective frame of reference in looking at the world.

Yet the power of this photo is not just aesthetic. It also derives from the scene outside the window, which we discover is the main square in old-town Warsaw. This adds a sense of place and perhaps something of an intangible historical weight to the buildings and plaza: Here kings, queens, the French, Russians, Germans, and Soviets made entrances and exits. Napoleon dictated. Chopin played. Nazis herded Jews. Lech Walesa spoke.

Americans tend to see Europe through a gauzy curtain – allowing Old-World romance to outweigh harder facts of political life. This shot, taken in 1986, is of communist Poland. Moscow still had a grip on the country. Knowing this, perhaps we read the scene differently. The light may seem a bit more severe, the curtains more encumbering, the photo more austere than if we had been told this was a corner in a more tolerant city, say Amsterdam.

This is the subtext. The immediate shot is an everyday scene at around midday. The focus of the entire photo is of a solitary woman, wearing the shapeless dress of the East European working class, making her way across the square. She carries packages in either hand, and the bow of her arms under their weight is timeless – the most human element in the entire photograph. Humbly apotheosized in this way, we might wonder about her: what she did during the war, whether she has children, and where they are.

The power of this focusing on an anonymous woman reminds me of the final scene in the 1981 film "Moscow Doesn't Believe in Tears." In the film a young Russian woman goes to Moscow at the end of World War II, makes a mistake with a young man, and has a child. He leaves and she must go to school, raise the child, and build a career on her own. It is hard, but she succeeds after 15 years. Finally she meets a man, then almost loses him. As they are reconciled, the camera pulls away from the window of her apartment to show thousands of other windows on the dozens of other nondescript high-rises against the Moscow night sky.

See what lies behind these windows, the shot seems to say. From the outside they hide so much.

Robert Marquand

'Lens and Light' is a series showcasing the work of Monitor staff photographers.

Orbits in Conjunction

IT is a summer evening, warm and still. My family and I are standing together in the backyard, passing the binoculars back and forth, gazing up at the near-perfect V of Mars, Jupiter, and Venus in conjunction above the pines. Bret, who is 5, and Nathan, 2, know nothing yet of mortality, so this once-in-a-lifetime configuration interests them only briefly; they would rather chase fireflies or climb their swing set in the dark.

For my wife, Rita, and me, however, this configuration of planets exerts a powerful tug. We want to keep looking at it, three worlds and a silver half-moon just a thumb's width apart. The moon is particularly beguiling this night, particularly lucid and near. I realize how much time has passed since I last paused like this beneath the umbrella of night to consider its distant glows – not since I was a young man, a boy, full of questions then, full of the callow expectation of response.

It is difficult finally to pull myself away from the heavens, even after Rita has rounded up the boys and herded them onto the porch. "I'll be there in a minute," I say as they tumble inside to the lights and warmth of enclosed space, of visible boundaries, of discernible beginnings and predictable ends. Then I am alone in the damp grass, a boy again, regarding with naked eye a darkness too deep for science's most powerful telescopes, too vast to be illuminated by any instrument but hope.

Soon Bret appears behind the window screen in his Ninja Turtle pajamas. "I'm ready for my story now," he calls, and I answer, "I'm coming, honey." But I cannot pull away just yet. I will never again be able to turn my eyes skyward and behold Mars, Jupiter, and Venus in this same configuration.

Too much time passes before I can force myself inside. The boys have fallen asleep on the living-room floor. I will get no giggles and hugs from Nathan this night, no warming snuggles from Bret as we lie together on his narrow bed for the 59th reading of "Corduroy." A few moments of closeness is all I can salvage as I carry each boy to his bed, nearly nuzzling them awake with my apologetic kisses.

It is a funny thing how the vastness of mystery can engender a quiet optimism.

It is as difficult then to leave their room as it was to abandon the display outside, for I have been reminded abruptly of the temporary nature of this other conjunction, this too-brief agreement of *our* orbits. In the years ahead we will inevitably drift away from one another. Rita and I will continue to share the same slow ellipse, but our boys, propelled by the thrust of their parents' love – a love that wants to pull as relentlessly as gravity but must find the strength to exert an opposite force – our boys are already speeding off toward parts unknown....

I am strangely energized this night. Aware of the days of our time together falling away behind us like shooting stars, I do not grumble off to bed as usual, I stay awake a while longer. We stay awake together, my wife and I. We tiptoe outside once more; we pass the binoculars back and forth. It is a funny thing how the vastness of mystery and the awareness of how very little we know can engender a quiet optimism. I would expect instead despair. But no. That human eyes have been scouring the heavens for millenia now, trillions of eyes asking to understand time and space and being, and not a single mind among them that has ever truly *known* – I would not expect this realization to pacify an anxious heart. And yet it does.

We stay awake, my wife and I, giving voice to feelings too often silent. And when the time comes at last for sleep, there is no tossing and turning, no worried recounting of the day now lost, no apprehensive rehearsal of tomorrow. The planets in the sky outside are gradually, imperceptibly drifting apart, as are the orbits inside this very house. But there *are* moments of conjunction in every grand and humble design, rare, sweet moments that can be stretched by an awareness of them, an appreciation, so that even a pale half-moon, solitary and barren as we know it to be, can be seen as somehow beautiful, somehow benign.

Randall Silvis

Our Struggle For Truth

IT was a windy, cold day. I noticed a flock of birds trying to fly against the strong west wind. I'd never seen anything like it. They flew forward as much as possible in one direction, then turned and flew the other direction, only to turn against the wind again and fly towards their destination. As I watched, I saw they were actually advancing!

It made me think. I wondered if I was as persistent myself during trying times, when the winds of adversity and discouragement confronted me. Not always!

Mary Baker Eddy writes of her own experience in her book, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, when she says: "The discoverer of Christian Science finds the path less difficult when she has the high goal always before her thoughts, than when she counts her footsteps in endeavoring to reach it. When the destination is desirable, expectation speeds our progress. The struggle for Truth makes one strong instead of weak, resting instead of wearying one."

The Christian Science Monitor's Religious Article

While "the struggle for Truth" does make us stronger, it can still be very challenging. Our approach may resemble that of the flock I saw—forward a little, turn aside temporarily, forge ahead again with more spiritual determination and resolve, until we at last conquer the difficulties. Overcoming the fears and setbacks of life does require effort and persistence. But the more we learn to place our trust in God, to follow His guidance, the more sure and direct will be our spiritual progress. Spiritual perseverance in the face of adversity may not always be easy, but the natural results of prayerfully placing our reliance on God, good, are spiritual advancement *and* human progress.

God created man in His own likeness. Thus man's perfect selfhood is spiritual—unimpeded by retrogression. Spiritually comprehending this helps us confront the winds of discord. Left alone, difficulties tend to continue and even accumulate. Prayer eliminates them from our experience.

When our daughter was quite young her nose seemed to be continuously runny. This didn't particularly seem to bother her, so while I took the normal caring actions of dressing her warmly and making sure she ate well and felt loved, for some reason I didn't specifically pray for her at first. Then one day I realized how long this had been going on! Right then, I picked her up in my arms and began to talk with her about God and how much He loves her. When the condition didn't immediately improve, I continued to pray for her. For a while she would get better for a day or two and then the symptoms would start over. This occurred two or three times. I felt like the birds fighting to move forward against the harsh winds.

Finally I prayed to know that spiritual perseverance in my struggle for Truth to be made manifest couldn't possibly be opposed. I knew that God is all-powerful—the only power. Within a few days, my daughter was completely healed.

In the Bible, Matthew's Gospel records that Christ Jesus said, "Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him." Far from meaning that we should agree with wrongdoing, this text is teaching us that when the strong winds of adversity and discouragement confront us, we can deal with them right away, through spiritually persistent prayer. Our struggle for Truth is rewarded with Truth gained and a life renewed. And we find safe haven from the storm.

In Colleen's Garden, Toronto

LILIES of the valley jampack your backyard!

I tell you how my Russian grandmother loved lilies of the valley, how her bridegroom, a colonel then in the czar's Imperial Army, had Fabergé make her a locket. The enamel indigo face was set with two sprigs of white bells on stems slender as threads, flanked by a leaf blade, dark green.

The ovoid halves, hinged at the top, slid apart and uncovered a tiny mirror. Etched on the silver side were the words "To beloved Lili from Leonid, 1899."

She sewed the locket into her hem when she fled Leningrad in 1933.

Lilies of the valley grew in a few of our American yards. We moved too often to learn if those we planted spread through the shade of others' lives.

I tell you how on my wedding day she gave me the locket, and how, after that marriage failed, a burglar stole my jewelry box. What I regret most is the locket.

You offer some of your lilies.

I take your trowel to a crowd of green, push the blade hard through the root-woven soil riddled with twigs and rocks, wrest four plants with tubers and blooms, pat back the soil.

I notice two snails, striped gold-beige-maroon, elegant as enamel, that would fit on a locket. I pick them up. Stunning, but what gardener wants snails?

Unsure where to put them, I stand on the threshold, the other hand clutching lily-of-the-valley plants. Now their opercula are ajar. They poke out their heads, elongate their necks, extend minuscule horns like sea-anemone tentacles. Each stretches its single foot. They crawl along the lines of my palm, two blind gypsies deciphering my life.

You note my catch. "Yes, we always must watch our step so we don't crunch the shells."

"You don't kill snails?"

I toss them back in the leaves, thank you, and in time I must move again. I take my clump home to plant, sorry to leave the snails.

Elisavietta Ritchie

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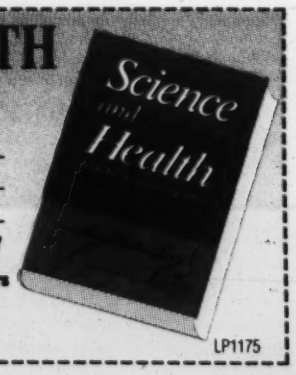


LP1175

"First the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear."

EDITORIALS

Inhumane 'China Trade'

FOR the last two years and through a network that amounts to slave trade, hundreds of people from the rural parts of China's Fujian Province have been enticed by promises of quick and easy wealth to enter the United States illegally. The pace has quickened. In 1991, the US Coast Guard intercepted 20 illegal immigrants, another 613 last year, and more than 1,600 since January.

West Coast cities have dominated as ports of entry. But the East Coast, from New Bedford, Mass., to Jacksonville, Fla., has seen activity as well. The most recent incident involved the grounding June 6 of a freighter off the borough of Queens in New York. The vessel's human cargo of some 300 Chinese apparently was bound for Massachusetts. Eight died trying to swim ashore. The captain and 11 crew members have been charged with conspiracy to commit alien-smuggling.

People who make the trip endure foul shipboard conditions. Most are forced to work off the price of transit – as high as $30,000 – by working long hours under highly exploitative conditions. Some have been kidnapped or beaten by members of the criminal organizations that brought them after the newcomers failed to make payments. Others are forced to work as gang enforcers or drug runners. Many say they regret their decision to leave China but add that criminal elements back home would kill them if they returned without repaying the fees.

The smuggling is well organized, criminally based, involves billions of dollars, and exploits well-meant openings in US immigration laws that made it easier for Chinese dissidents to enter the US after the Tiananmen Square massacre in 1989. Also, Washington correctly identified China's forced-sterilization program for population control as a human rights violation, thus as grounds for asylum in the US.

The would-be immigrants deserve more compassion than censure. Despite sometimes justified doubts about their asylum requests, these people are entitled to and should receive the due-process rights offered under US immigration laws..

The Immigration and Naturalization Service, which handles the cases, also needs help: It has 260,000 asylum applications pending; it can process only 20,000 to 30,000 a year. Congress must match liberalized asylum provisions with the increased resources to handle them.

A View of Mulroney

ON June 3, Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney told President Clinton that his government was "ready to commit military assets" to blockade Haiti in order to bring down the illegitimate military regime there.

He also encouraged Mr. Clinton to send American troops to the Balkans to help force a settlement in that area.

Clinton, trying to brighten his image at home and win Senate approval of his economic program, is not likely to follow that advice. But Mr. Mulroney, who will soon relinquish his leadership of the Conservative Party and the Canadian government, takes his losses in stride.

In the spring of 1992, recession and opposition to the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), among other complaints, dropped his approval rating to 12 percent. Parliamentary reins temporarily remain in Tory hands, and an election will be called by November to select a new parliament. Polls indicate the Liberal Party could win.

Whatever the outcome, Mulroney's successor will be hard put to duplicate the kind of relationship he has had with US leaders, particularly Presidents Reagan and Bush.

Mr. Bush said Mulroney "never wavered – he led. While battling for Canada's best interests, he also has been a staunch ally for the United States. I particularly think of Canada's support for Desert Storm and Canada's leadership on the Somalia crisis."

Americans responded to Mulroney's candor. He approached the most troublesome of his nation's problems head-on. That is a characteristic people in the US like in political leaders.

The prime example of Mulroney's forthright approach was his attempt to rid his nation of the constitutional crisis over the status of French Canada.

Perhaps on that subject he could have been more circumspect, an approach that he did utilize in some other situations.

Determined to maintain their regional identities and to avoid domination by the colossus to their south, many Canadians charge that Mulroney "sold" Canada to the US, particularly in the form of the free trade agreement between the two nations and the forthcoming NAFTA, which includes Mexico.

After having seen Mulroney in action for the past nine years, it would not be surprising to find him, after a time, playing some substantial role in the government/political realm.

Free World Should Help End Banda's Dictatorship in Malawi

By Andrew S. Reynolds and Enoch Chihana

IN a world where most of the few remaining one-party states are being swept away by pro-democracy movements, one small African nation has so far resisted all calls for democratic freedom. The history of post-colonial Malawi illustrates how a precolonial nationalist hero can turn, almost overnight, into a dictator ruthlessly suppressing any dissent against his rule.

Dr. Kamuzu Hastings Banda became president of Malawi in 1966 at the age of 68; he still holds almost total power, propped up through sustained United States, British, and South African aid over the past 30 years.

His human rights record has been a patchwork of inconsistencies. While providing homes for more than 1 million Mozambican refugees, he has at the same time jailed thousands of political prisoners, many of whom were former Cabinet ministers and high-ranking members of his own Congress Party. Amnesty International has recorded the cases of many political prisoners who have been systematically tortured and died in custody; there is evidence of opposition leaders being murdered by government hit squads.

Where the most basic human rights are abused and democracy is trampled upon, the US, as the only world superpower, should lead the international outcry.

However, as his reign seems to be coming to a close, Dr. Banda has come under increasing international and internal pressure to instigate multiparty democracy.

The leader of the pro-democracy movement is Chakufwa Chihana, who spent seven years in exile as the head of the Southern African Trade Union Coordination Council and, in September of last year, helped launch the Malawian Alliance for Democracy (AFORD), which Banda immediately banned. When Mr. Chihana returned to Malawi in April 1992 to campaign for the restoration of human rights and democratic change, he was arrested as he stepped off the plane and charged with sedition.

Civil unrest, sparked by displays of popular support for Chihana, began to intensify as he languished in jail, despite the government's characterization of him as a "foreign stooge."

Eight Roman Catholic bishops were arrested for criticizing the government, and riots in the main cities broke out, triggered by Chihana's continued detention without trial.

However, despite international calls for his release, Chihana was convicted of sedition last December and sentenced to 2 1/2 years hard labor, which in Malawi is tantamount to a death sentence.

He appealed and on March 29 his sentence was reduced to nine months, still harsh for a man whose only crime was to call for democratic reform.

Before he returned to Malawi last year he called his family and said: "This is the last time that I will be speaking to you. I am going to Malawi and I will be killed. But if I am killed, people in the international community will know there is something wrong with this government and someone will come to liberate people."

Even though Chihana remains in jail, Banda has been forced (by the suspension of international aid) to hold a referendum on whether Malawians want to move to a multiparty democracy or not. This will take place on June 14, but at the present it is still illegal to campaign for a multiparty state, and opposition movements are banned from freely operating. The government has even insisted on separate ballot boxes for the 'yes' and 'no' votes, totally negating the principle of a secret ballot.

Unless the international community applies strong diplomatic pressure, the intimidating tactics of the "Malawi Youth Pioneers" (Banda's private army) will make the referendum a farce.

Malawi has no oil, few natural resources, and is of little strategic benefit to the US, but the West still has a responsibility to help Malawians' longing for democracy to gain expression through a new constitution.

Some in the US Senate recognized this, and a resolution sponsored by US Sens. Edward Kennedy (D) of Massachusetts, Nancy Kassebaum (R) of Kansas, Paul Simon (D) of Illinois, and Arlen Specter (R) of Pennsylvania soon will be debated.

This bipartisan resolution "strongly condemns the continued incarceration of dissidents, restrictions on freedom of speech, and the repeated short-term arrests of opposition leaders in order to impede their pro-democracy efforts."

It also "condemns all efforts by the Malawian government to limit the ability of popular organizations to campaign in relation to the upcoming referendum." The senators argue that the US should not resume aid to Malawi until all political detainees are released, all basic freedoms are respected, and all are permitted to participate freely in the selection of government.

However, while the adoption of this resolution would be a great fillip to the pro-democracy movement, it will require more than the withdrawal of international aid to pressure the Banda government to listen to the will of the Malawian people and introduce democratic reforms.

Where the most basic human rights are abused and democracy is trampled upon, the US, as the only world superpower, should lead the international outcry.

We call on President Clinton to demand the immediate release of all prisoners of conscience in Malawi, including Chakufa Chihana, and to bring pressure to bear on the Banda government to ensure that the June referendum is held under free and fair conditions.

■ *Andrew S. Reynolds is a pre-doctoral fellow at the University of California at Irvine. Enoch Chihana is Chakufwa Chihana's son and a senior at Wichita State University in Kansas.*

OPINION/ESSAYS

Boosting the tax by 15 cents a gallon would meet Clinton's budget goals

Raise the Gasoline Tax

By Ernest J. Oppenheimer

CONGRESS is confronted with the task of making a decision on energy taxes. The Clinton administration is backing away from a broad-based Btu tax that would increase the cost of most types of energy. This proposal has aroused opposition from energy producers, manufactures, utilities, exporters, and consumers. Sen. J. Bennett Johnston (D) of Louisiana, chairman of the Energy Committee, and Sen. David L. Boren (D) of Oklahoma, a member of the Finance Committee, have proposed replacing the Btu tax with a modest gasoline tax increase. This alternative would serve the national interest far better than President Clinton's program.

The Btu tax would harm domestic producers of oil, natural gas, coal, and electricity. It would increase the cost of virtually all manufactured products, thereby undermining US competitiveness in the international marketplace. It has been estimated that several hundred thousand jobs would be lost to foreign competitors. This result would be at cross-purpose with Mr. Clinton's professed goals of stimulating the economy and creating new jobs. The Btu tax would do little to improve the environment. It would be costly to administer. The majority of Americans oppose this tax.

In the peculiar logic of politics, the almost universal harmfulness of the Btu tax has been converted into a virtue. It provides almost limitless opportunities to gain favor with constituencies by exempting them from the full impact of the tax.

The White House and some key players in the Congress have vied with each other in the endeavor to curry goodwill by granting such exemptions. Mr. Clinton's political advisers were astute enough to recognize that he could restore strength to his flagging popularity by announcing that he had decided to cancel the Btu tax altogether.

The US Treasury estimates that revenue from the Btu tax over the first five years would total about $70 billion to $75 billion. A 15-cents-per-gallon gasoline tax increase also would generate about $75 billion over five years. In contrast to the harmful impact of the Btu levy, the gasoline tax would have many beneficial consequences.

Even though a tax of 15 cents per gallon is very modest, it would provide some incentive for car and truck owners to switch to more fuel-efficient vehicles or to vehicles powered with non-taxed fuels, such as compressed natural gas. Fleet operators, who are major users of transportation fuels, are likely to be particularly receptive to implementing such cost-saving procedures.

The auto industry would be a major beneficiary from this development. Demand for more fuel-efficient or alternatively fueled vehicles would increase by a significant amount for many years. Employment in this industry and its suppliers would increase. Investments in producing alternatively fueled vehicles would be stepped up. The impact on the economy would be positive.

By encouraging the increased use of compressed natural gas (CNG) as a vehicle fuel, the gasoline tax would give a boost to all sectors of the natural gas business. It would stimulate natural gas resources; the following states would experience improved economic prospects: Texas, Alaska, Oklahoma, Louisiana, New Mexico, Kansas, Wyoming, Colorado, California, West Virginia, Arkansas, and Utah. To accelerate the switch to natural-gas-powered vehicles, these states could increase their local gasoline taxes and use some of the proceeds to help put in place the infrastructure of filling stations to service those vehicles. This action would revitalize the domestic petroleum industry and bring renewed prosperity to these states.

The harmfulness of the Btu tax has been converted into a virtue. It provides almost limitless opportunities to gain favor with constituencies by exempting them from the full impact of the tax.

The mechanism for collecting gasoline taxes is already in place, so the proposed increase in this levy would involve minimum cost or administrative overhead. Virtually all the proceeds could be used for deficit reduction. Moreover, the positive impact of the gasoline tax on the economy would increase federal revenues from higher personal income and greater corporate profits. These additional revenues might be as large as the direct collections from the gasoline tax.

The shift to more fuel-efficient and CNG powered vehicles would be more beneficial to the environment than the Btu tax.

The average car owner uses about 500 gallons of gasoline a year. The proposed tax levy would raise his annual spending on gasoline by $75. This modest cost would bring many economic and financial benefits.

The case for the proposed action is so compelling that it is unfortunate to label this measure a "tax." It would be more appropriate for the American people to think of the gasoline tax as a lucrative investment that will bring large returns in terms of a cleaner environment, greater energy security, revitalized domestic petroleum and automobile industries, the creation of new jobs, and the strengthening of government finance. Each dollar of gasoline tax will generate several dollars of benefits. It is the best energy tax option.

A gasoline-tax increase would be well received by financial markets. Many business executives and economists have publicly stated support for such action. A recent Harris poll revealed that a majority of respondents favored raising the gasoline tax by 15 cents a gallon. This stands in marked contrast to the negative response to the Btu tax, which was opposed by 62 percent of the participants in a recent Wall Street Journal/NBC poll.

Governments in Western Europe and the Far East levy gasoline taxes ranging from $2 to $4 per gallon. In contrast, the US has the lowest gasoline tax in the industrial world. The federal government collects 14 cents and states levy an average of 20 cents per gallon.

If the federal tax were raised 15 cents a gallon, the total would still be far below the level prevailing elsewhere. Once accustomed to higher gasoline taxes, Americans may decide to emulate the rest of the world and gain the many advantages that would follow a much more substantial gasoline tax increase.

■ *Ernest J. Oppenheimer is a New York-based writer and lecturer on public policy issues.*

South Africa's Nuclear Example

IS the idea of aiming at zero nuclear weapons so crazy? A year ago, then Rep. Les Aspin (D) of Wisconsin told a graduating class at MIT that, "A world without nuclear weapons would not be disadvantageous to the United States. In fact, a world without nuclear weapons would actually be better."

Since then Mr. Aspin has become secretary of defense. His statements on nuclear weapons are more cautious. And the Clinton administration is reluctant to support a comprehensive ban on nuclear testing, arguing that the US may want to resume testing in the years ahead.

South Africa is taking a different track. Three years ago, it dismantled the six atomic bombs it had secretly produced. It then signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and allowed scores of inspections of once-clandestine nuclear facilities by the International Atomic Energy Agency. In April, the head of South Africa's nuclear program met with specialists from several black African countries in Zimbabwe. He loaded them down with the kind of details needed to reassure them that his country's intent in the nuclear field was now peaceful.

HELENA COBBAN

South Africa may be showing us all the way. Granted, some cynics say the waning white-led regime just wanted to divest itself of nuclear weapons before all governmental assets fall into the hands of the black majority. But a better explanation may be that dismantling the nuclear arsenal, and the way these canny South Africans have chosen to do this, is part and parcel of the shift in national doctrine and self-definition that President Frederick de Klerk has spearheaded during his years in office.

Developing, and then hanging onto, the nuclear arsenal was probably a response to the deep-seated insecurity the white community suffered during the apartheid years. They felt surrounded by black Africans both within and outside their borders. So when Mr. De Klerk started envisioning a new, more inclusive future for his country, this entailed not just vast changes in the domestic political system, but also a new approach to national security. Nuclear weapons were transformed from being a boon to a potentially major irritant as an end-of-apartheid government reached out to build good relations with neighbors.

How about the rest of us? Plenty of analysts these days are finding reasons why the US should hang on to its nuclear weapons. Many of these "reasons" rely on a fairly amorphous and generalized sense of global threat. Samuel P. Huntington has written of cultural factors that cause people from "Confucian and Islamic cultures" to pose a large new threat to Western values. Keeping nuclear weapons is thus made necessary by these new threats, analysts like Dr. Huntington say.

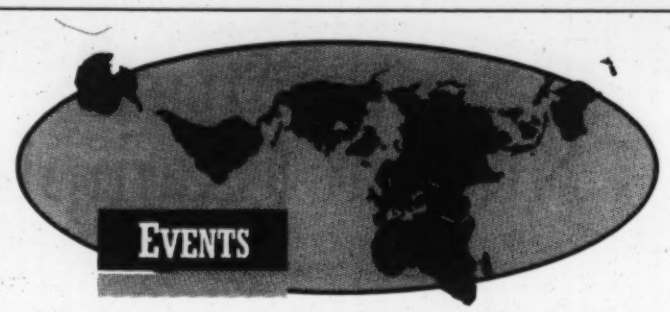
But the leaders of white South Africa have faced a more present threat from angry black Africans. If white South Africans can magnanimously reach out and reassure its neighbors, then surely we, whose sense of threat is so much less a daily reality, can reach out and build confidence with those whose actions we may otherwise have cause to fear.

One way to do this is to support a comprehensive test ban. Another is to commit the US to further deep cuts in its nuclear arsenal, unilaterally. The Russians, Ukrainians, Iranians, and North Koreans might even be invited to witness some of the dismantling. Such acts could be linked with new high-level statements about moving to a nuclear-weapons-free world. Aspin already has those speeches written.

In 20 years we might be close to a post-nuclear world. That kind of world would depend on creative new applications of old notions of collective security. It would depend on an aggressive commitment to confidence building and to maintaining networks of strong relationships worldwide.

Alternatively, we might be in Fortress America, scared of nations "not like us," armed to the teeth, still paying for a huge military, and hanging on to our nuclear stockpile. The white South Africans have been down that road. They saw the dead-end. Let's hope their efforts to change course succeed, and that the rest of us can learn from their example.

■ *Helena Cobban writes and does research on foreign affairs from Washington and other locations.*



CHINA TO HELP CURB ALIEN SMUGGLING
China said yesterday it wanted to cooperate with other countries to stop Chinese from illegally entering other countries. The statement from the Foreign Ministry in Beijing came after United States officials called for international action to stem alien smuggling. A refugee-laden freighter was grounded Sunday off New York City. The freighter had nearly 300 illegal Chinese immigrants on board, and six of them died after jumping into the sea in attempts to get to shore. The US Coast Guard has intercepted 1,666 illegal Chinese immigrants since January, compared with 613 last year, and 20 in 1991. Beijing says most of the smuggling rings are based outside China.

Christopher grilled

Secretary of State Warren Christopher faced questions from his European Community counterparts yesterday in Luxembourg on whether Washington has reneged on promises to send ground forces to Bosnia. A so-called safe areas plan of the United Nations would require up to 25,000 US troops, NATO has estimated. But the 12 EC ministers are committed to maintaining a united transatlantic front in the face of continued Serb aggression in Bosnia and new fighting between Muslims and Croats there. Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic said Wednesday his forces will take Sarajevo peacefully or by force and urged Muslims to give up the idea of a unified Bosnian state.

Haitians could be free soon

More than 150 AIDS-infected Haitian refugees and relatives held at the U.S. naval base in Cuba could be free within weeks now that a federal judge has ordered their release, advocates say. There was no immediate word from the Clinton administration on whether it would appeal Tuesday's ruling and block the camp's closing. "The Haitians' plight is a tragedy of immense proportion, and their continued detainment is totally unacceptable to this court," wrote U.S. District Judge Sterling Johnson.

UN stands by election

The UN peacekeeping mission in Cambodia today rejected demands by the government for a review of the results of Cambodia's election, which the ruling party lost. The leader of the opposition party that won the May 23-28 election returned to the capital to participate in talks to break the tense deadlock caused by the government's reluctance to hand over power. The government has claimed there were widespread irregularities in the balloting organized by the UN.

And so they married

Just as Japan's crown prince and his new princess emerged from the Imperial Palace yesterday after their tradition-steeped wedding ceremony, the sun broke through rain-heavy skies for the first time all day. Many hope the match of Naruhito, the foreign-educated, liberal-minded heir to the Chrysanthemum Throne, and Masako Owada, the savvy diplomat he pursued for half a dozen years before she said yes, will modernize the world's oldest hereditary monarchy. Life in Tokyo came to a near-standstill briefly as Japanese by the millions gathered around televisions to watch the vows.

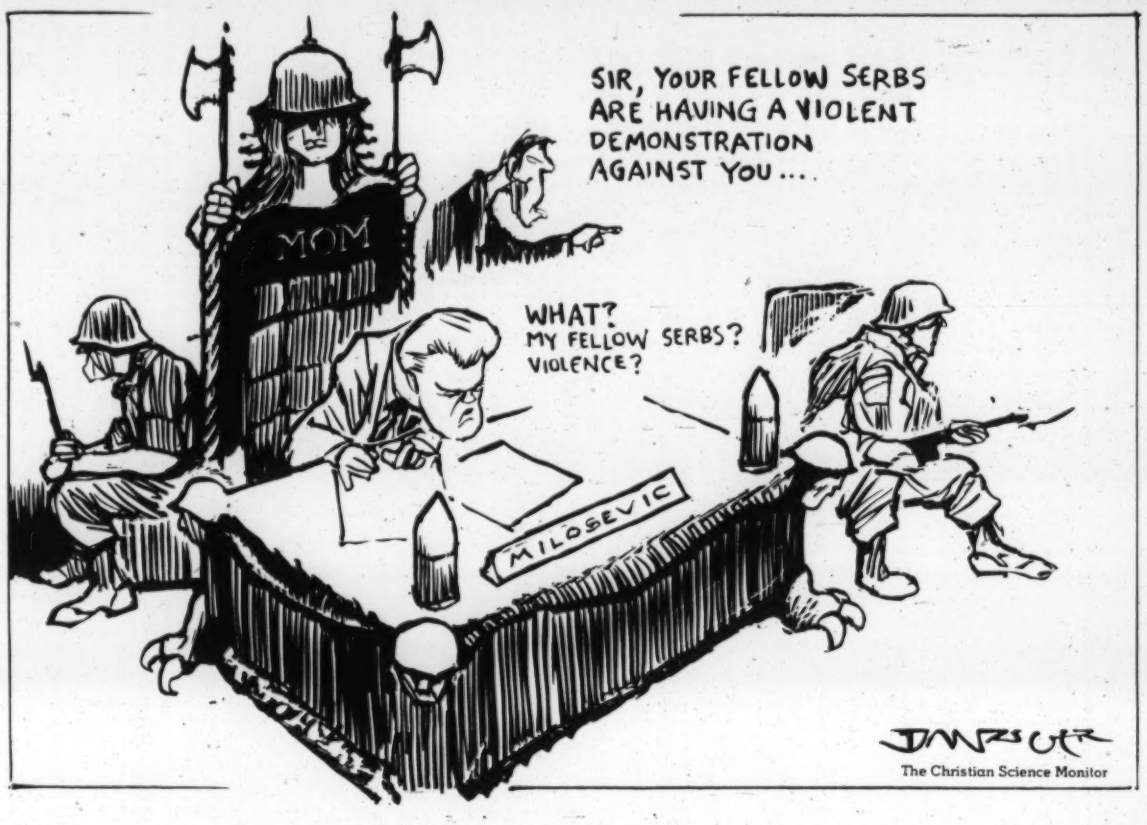
AFP

NEW COUPLE: *Japan's crown prince and his bride in their imperial wedding costumes.*

Sutherland heads GATT

Peter Sutherland of Ireland will head the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade as the US, Europe, and Japan try to revive world trade talks, officials said yesterday. A 47-year-old lawyer who is chairman of Allied Irish Banks, Mr. Sutherland won wide respect as a European Community commissioner from 1985 to 1988. Meanwhile, French farmers vandalized an office of French Foreign Minister Alain Juppe in Paris and demonstrated in several towns to protest France's decision to accept a US-European Community deal on soybeans, cutting subsidies to the farmers.

– Compiled by David Mutch



Cellular phones and cereal-box-sized computers bring war rooms of information to patrol cars

SINS – Striking Back Smarter

"This is the city, Los Angeles, Calif. Crime happens here every 17 seconds. I know, I'm a cop. I carry a badge. My name's Friday. My partner's name is Gannon."

– From lead-in to 1960s TV series, "Dragnet"

FOR the real-life Sgts. Friday & Gannon of the world, old-fashioned, American "just the facts, ma'am" crimefighting is about to take a leap into the stratosphere.

According to the California Department of Justice – and special agents like Michael Freer, a state narcotics agent for the last 14 years – the reason is high-technology and data-base advancements that bring war rooms full of information into the patrol car. That means accessing suspect fingerprints, photos, prison and arrest records, logistical maps, signed search warrants, and other agency documents at the touch of a key.

A LETTER FROM SACRAMENTO

"This is going to change the whole world for us," says Mr. Freer, lifting a tiny cellular phone and a Grape-Nuts-box-sized computer from a leather case. Ten years ago, Mr. Freer's department was using typewriters; three years ago they got their first computer. Now, in a first-of-its-kind, $600 million collaboration between the state's Department of Justice (DOJ) and 57 state and local agencies, the law-enforcement community is striking back at criminals en masse with a Statewide Integrated Narcotics System (SINS).

"Until now, nothing like this system for police has existed," says Jeff Scheel, project manager for the Los Angeles County Clearinghouse, a multi-agency crime-fighting body. "The significance goes beyond the technology itself to the concept of growing partnerships between local, state, and federal agencies," he adds. "Obviously, drug dealers don't stay in one place. This has the potential for every state in the union to join up."

Using the new system, a drug bust might ensue as follows: Assigned officers feed the location of suspects into a computer, which generates a three-dimensional map showing site location, access routes, and surrounding areas. Files showing the ownership of the bust location would appear immediately. Among the other data available might be floor plans of the targeted buildings, photos or sketches of the suspects, as well as their court and weapons records and any known connections to crime syndicates.

"When I arrive at the scene, I can already know everything about who I am looking for, what they look like ... and what other agency might be rushing to the scene as well," Freer says. "I am not only that far ahead of the criminal, I feel much safer."

Beginning July 1, through the DOJ's Integrated Access Link (DIAL), a county sheriff or other participating agency can automatically access relevant information no matter where the databases reside or what computer format they are in.

Electronic Data Systems (EDS) of St. Louis is providing a unique application of Geographic Information System software for the project, funded by grants from the federal Bureau of Justice Assistance and Office of National Control Policy. Mainframe computers are already installed in Sacramento and Los Angeles and client agencies are connecting to them with dedicated phone lines.

Digital Equipment Corporation is the prime contractor for the project and ETAK of Menlo Park, Calif., is providing the base-map information.

"If we are unable to manage information more effectively, we will never be successful in the war on drugs," Barnes says. "We have to invest in working smarter, not in purchasing more equipment and putting more pressure on our police officers to work harder. SINS delivers that capability."

– Daniel B. Wood